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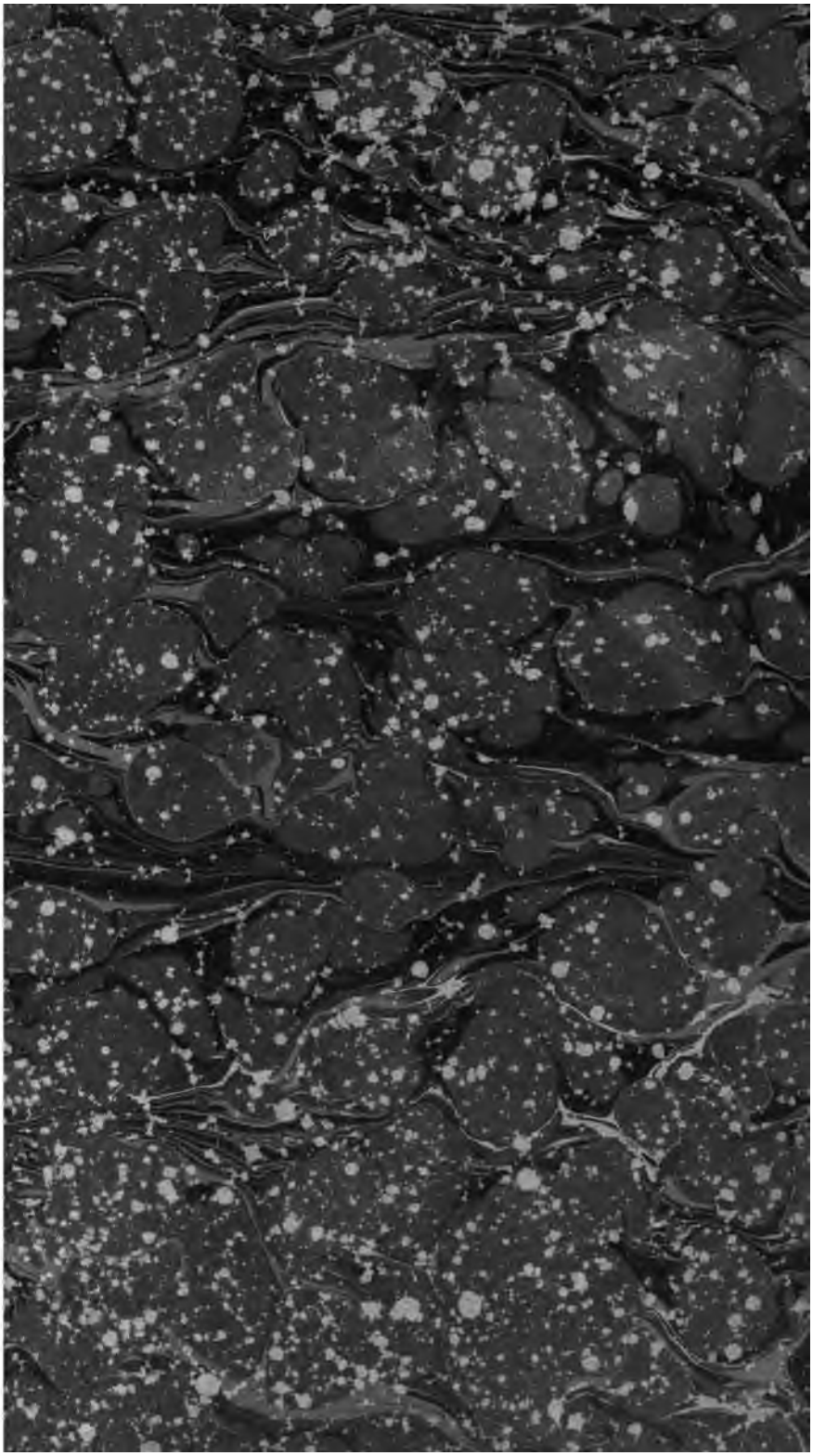

MEMOIRS

OF

MIRABEAU:

BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY, AND POLITICAL.

BY HIMSELF,

HIS FATHER, HIS UNCLE, AND HIS ADOPTED CHILD.

VOL. III.

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Fragments of unpublished letters from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Longo.

MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

BOOK IX.

THE misfortune of which we gave an account at the end of the last book, did not depress Mirabeau's spirits. His mind was so constituted that it could readily combine good taste and facility in literary composition, with the most acute anxiety and suffering. Indeed, it was by such mental torture that he re-tempered his intellect, and gave it an increase of strength; for the principle of its supernatural power lay in the violent passions he had derived from nature. The death of his child, therefore, stimulated him to fresh exertion, and the more so, no doubt, because he was conscious that this event had removed one of the chief obstacles to his release. He also knew that his mother was straining every nerve in his behalf, and this we are led to infer from a sarcasm of the Marquis.

"I know not," wrote this harsh father, "what they

are plotting upon their dunghill, but thence springs forth all the phosphorescence of the moment*."

Mirabeau now appeared less disposed to submit to the tedious forms of a lengthened negociation. He displayed symptoms of irritation and impatience, at which the sensitive prudence of the negociator, Dupont, took the alarm, and made him invoke Sophie's assistance.

" I have," he wrote to her, " to oppose to your grief, in which I sincerely sympathise, an occupation that best becomes a heart like yours. Help me to save our friend; and in order that we may do so, try to prevent him from ruining his cause by impatience. Like a man who has lost all hope, he talks to me of plans that I am sure will seriously injure him and deprive him of all resources. These plans cannot be attended with any success, and can give him only the pleasure, so little worthy of him, of inflicting pain upon those who have power over his fate. This is not the way to improve his condition. He enters into these unreasonable projects at the very time I have begun, and apparently on the strongest grounds, to hope for his release. He may thus destroy the fruit of my long exertions, and this annoys and grieves me. You must quiet him; from your pen must flow persuasion and peace. If, in our counsels, we men state harsh truths, we resemble surgeons obliged

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 15th 1780.

to inflict torture to effect a cure; but we have not the address to soften the pain. Providence has granted this power to your sex alone. Employ it then; become a skilful physician, and by a mild system of treatment maintain the blood of our friend in the state of calmness necessary for my operation. Tell him that he will never have a more zealous friend than myself, one better able to judge of all circumstances connected with his case, or one more anxious to save him *."

As we have already stated, the Bailli had justified his nephew's letter (May 22nd), and the Marquis had accepted his brother's explanation.

" I am happy that you have found another sense for the follies which you mentioned in your last. For my own part, his fine words will produce no effect upon me, and as I shall not answer his letter, he will not write again. Let him take the proper road, that is all I can desire; and provided I have it not upon my conscience that I turned his pursuit from myself to another person, I ask no more. But I shall always, as need may require, use the same consonants and the same vowels †."

Certain statements in favour of Mirabeau having appeared without his knowledge in many of the public

* Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemaine to Sophie, dated June 19th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 29th 1780.

papers, he was apprehensive that it would prove a new ground of paternal animosity against him*."

"I yesterday saw Dupont, which I scarcely expected. He informed me that another case for my mother had been sent judicially to my father. In it I am very warmly, though very injudiciously, defended. This may do me a great deal of harm, if it were only from the annoyance it must occasion my father, and from its making him fear that if he liberated me it would appear to the public that he had yielded to force†."

At the same time Mirabeau again wrote to his uncle, who, in proportion as he was secretly serving him, treated him with greater harshness.

"However useless to you may be a correspondence with me, and however irksome I may consider it to refuse constantly all assistance to a man to whom, before even he was born, I had, in some degree, devoted my laborious life, I shall never add to your sorrows that of receiving from me no reply to your letters.

"If age, reason, and reflection have produced in your bosom a repentance for your past misdeeds as deep as it ought to be, my lecturing you would be out of place. If, on the contrary, your present letters are not more deserving of my confidence than the verbal and written

* See "Correspondence from Vincennes," vol. iv. p. 221.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated July 18th 1780.

promises you have so often made to me, and never performed, still my lecturing you would be ridiculous as well as useless. Ask your own heart why your intentions are always looked upon by me with suspicion.

"You must remember that, as you were walking with me in the great hall of this very castle, you gave me assurances, to which I replied, that if you deceived me, you would obtain your father's pardon much easier than my confidence. It was on the strength of these assurances that (not to reproach you with what I have done for you) I brought about a reconciliation between you and your father. What man would then have told me that I had been working for one who would so soon belie my testimony? I confess that my endeavours on that occasion have produced effects so deplorable, not only to yourself but to your whole family, that I have no desire to involve myself a second time in your affairs.

"You ask if it is 'surprising that a man born of a respectable family is not a monster?' True, it may be not very surprising; but there are excesses to which the fire of youth does not lead. Do not attribute what you are pleased to term your *deviations* to bad advice, for you have never taken advice.

"It is because you are born of a family still more respectable in the purity of its morals and the antiquity of its honours (now-a-days turned into ridicule and

superseded by indulgence for vice) than in the other illusions of human nature, that you are more culpable; for you had none but excellent domestic examples to follow.

" You ask my advice: I have already given it to you. I have pointed out the persons whom it is necessary you should appease, for by them will the favours be dispensed which you may solicit.

" But the best advice I can offer you, is to work at your own improvement. I must observe to you that the most disgusting pride continues to prevail in your letters, even where there is the strongest evidence of your attempts to conceal it. I cannot but perceive this in the reasons you assigu for not writing to your father. Upon this particular point I can offer you no counsel, because, in his place, I should be disgusted at the very sight of your hand-writing.

" In your effusions there is always a little mixture of threatening. You now threaten me with your despair. Try on the contrary to give the family and myself some hope of you, which, do not fancy that any of your letters have hitherto done. Pride, I repeat, and a spirit of independence, pierce through the honeyed words with which you cover them.

" In another of your letters you say that ' one *lettre de cachet* is as good as another.' This would be true for any one but yourself;—but have you not twice

broken your ban, and, each time, to commit an action which you call a *deviation*, but to which others do not apply so indulgent a term?

"In the letter I am now answering, I know not whether you ever wished to take the trouble to conceal your pride. 'It behoves me,' you say, 'to be candid in my avowal of the wrongs I have committed; but am I to be mean in my supplications?' The whole sentence is tainted with the most detestable pride. 'If,' you say, 'the form of my entreaties has any thing mean, I ought to be improved and corrected by reflection, and not debased by misfortune.' You then ask me if you are wrong in thinking thus.

"Yes, you are wrong; not for not suffering yourself to be debased by misfortune, if you were only unfortunate. But it would surely not be debasing yourself to acknowledge your faults, and throw yourself upon the kindness of a father, a father-in-law, and a young wife, each of whom you have cruelly offended. It is by what you term your *deviations* that you are really debased. The haughty air with which you ask for pardon is a further offence.

"I repeat that I have pointed out the only means that can be useful to you. But I advise you to persuade yourself that you are guilty of very grievous faults, and that up to the present time you do not seem convinced of it. Such conviction might make your style less offensive than it is at present; for you

must be aware that what would be a matter of course in a man perfectly guiltless, becomes offensive in one who has respected nobody, outraged his nearest of kin, and violated that which ought ever to be held in respect*."

Prior to receiving this severe letter, Mirabeau had written as follows:—

"God bless you, my dear and kind uncle, who have given me such prudent and useful advice. To you am I indebted for having persevered with Madame de Mirabeau:—not because I was not fully sensible of all the wrongs I had inflicted upon her, and was sincerely anxious to repair them so far as lay in my power. But when I humbled myself to my wife—when I implored her assistance and received no reply from her, I was more than once ready to yield to the disgust inspired by such a situation, in which, what I had left of pride, struggled against my sense of justice.

"But he, in whom a prudent and good man takes interest, cannot be lost. Your lessons, your advice, and even your censure, often harsh in form, but in which your humanity and tenderness are evident, have kept up my courage and excited my gratitude. I have persevered, as it was doubtless right I should; but to you I am indebted for having done as I ought; and

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated July 17th 1780.

thanks to Providence and to you, this has not been so unfruitful as I had reason to fear.

"Madame de Mirabeau has just written to me that she pities my situation, and is desirous I should be happy; and that, as I think her solicitations may succeed with my father, she will use them. I am much affected at this mark of kindness on her part. I am grateful for it on her own account, on her father's account, and on your account, my dear uncle. If you will condescend to second her endeavours, I doubt not that you will raise your nephew from the grave, and restore to my father a son who dares not fall at his feet.

"How anxious am I, my dear uncle, that my future conduct shall be as worthy of you as my gratitude is proportionate to your goodness. I must try to justify this goodness, but I do not flatter myself with success. I will, however, perish in the attempt*."

At the same time Mirabeau wrote to his wife, who had now become the arbitress of his release. We do not insert the letter, because it has been given elsewhere, though in a garbled form†.

It was affecting, and made an unusual impression, for it was praised by the Marquis of Mirabeau, as will appear in the following extract:—

"I am surprised at his turning round in that letter

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated July 16th 1780.

† Peuchet, vol. i. p. 509.

—a thing I did not expect from him. The letter appears to me well written, noble, clever, and equitable. This is the first time I have seen anything in him like true sensibility. In this production his pride bends and becomes dignity. What a singular and fantastic personage!—mad in excess of pride—mad in turbulence, and ardour, and unsociableness—mad by a physically overwrought mind, and capable of acts of madness in good as well as in evil; not having a positively bad heart, not unkind—even the reverse, but who, presuming wholly upon his own resources, has no more nerve than a slug, and no more energy of mind than a bill-sticker*."

"Do you see him with his bathos, specious enough, at least this time—do you see this babe of thirty years of age, over whom time hath passed like a saw through a beam, tearing, heating, reducing, flattening — this man, who is nothing but thorough pride, and who, if you take his pride from him, is nothing but a burst soap-bubble? Take heed, moreover, that he will not correct himself of the vice of pride: all his letters stink of it. Turbulence might remain, but we shall see whether his madness remains entire. Whatever happens, we must adopt, with regard to this man, carelessness of heart, and non-occupation of mind. Thus shall

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 12th 1780.

I remain. In other respects, he is of the race necessary for the age in which he lives; and, as the Duchess of Civrac said to me, he is likely to climb upon the backs of all of them*."

Dupont also found the letter "clever," whilst Boucher praised the noble and candid spirit that pervaded it. Mirabeau rejected the compliment of the former, and accepted only that of the latter.

"Your simplicity, as you term it, is always sure to defeat a finessing spirit, because with great powers of mind yourself, acknowledged even by Dupont, who is very fastidious in this respect, and says that M. Lenoir has no other talents but yours, you have that rectitude of heart which leads you to prefer the shortest road, which is always the straightest. Artifice of disposition is often nothing more than the result of the fixed and persevering attention of an ordinary intellect acted upon by personal interest. Artifice may indicate intellect, but I think I have observed that it never exists in intellect of a superior order, unless accompanied with meanness of heart. A man of superior mind disdains little means: he has recourse only to the greater, that is to say, the most simple. Artifice, in fine, is a lie in action; and the falsehood springs from fear and personal interest, and consequently from meanness. But

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 13th 1780.

Dupont is candid by nature, and artful from precaution; he has perhaps not sufficient energy of mind for the intellect he possesses*."

To put his nephew to further trial, the Bailli continued to write to him in severe terms. Was this artifice, or the result of conviction? We cannot say to a certainty; but we are disposed to attribute it to conviction, because nine years prior to this period, the Bailli thus wrote to Mirabeau:—

"You have found me indulgent and forgiving; do not from this draw a premature conclusion, but remember that if ever your father has again reason to complain of you, I shall be as strong an advocate against as I have been for you, and he will pardon you sooner than I shall†."

The following is an extract from the Bailli's last letter:—

"I cannot affirm that your wife will not find more talent than feeling in your letter. For my own part, I will not conceal from you, that in all you say flattering to myself, I cannot but detect a fund of pride which makes you find my censure very often harsh in form. If Heaven ever grants that you return to good, you will think otherwise.

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated July 27th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated May 4th 1771.

"Look into your conscience, and see if my advice was worth being attended to. Judge me abstractedly, and without reference to the reputation which you found me enjoying in the narrow circle to which Providence, justified by the small sum of talent I possess, had confined me. Separate from me what the world may have added to this reputation whenever I was mentioned to you: still you will find me an honest man, who has injured no one, and, in reward of this, enjoys public esteem. Now, I have acquired this esteem by never swerving, any more at least than human weakness compelled me to do, from that rule which I have always taken as the principle of my conduct—*Alteri ne feceris quod tibi fieri non vis.* But I am writing too much about myself: permit me, however, to add that I have even attempted to strike out the two negatives, and to do, whenever I was able, that which I wished should be done unto me.

"Probe your own heart, and examine whether the honour, the peace, nay, the life of others, are not things which every honest man should respect. Next examine whether your pride did not make you feel pleasure, and even affect a sort of glory in shining at the expense of others; and whether you have respected the honour and the good of your neighbour.

"You do not appear to me sensible of the enormity of your faults. The enemies which your father has made by his works, in which he has attacked nothing

but abuses, and always respected individuals, would be afraid, in the face of the public, to avow themselves his foes. Your mad fury has rendered you the instrument of their vengeance. I repeat to you that you do not appear to me as sensible as you ought to be of the full extent of your guilt.

"I also repeat that I dare not, nor shall I ever dare to become your security with your father, your wife, and your father-in-law*."

These letters greatly affected Mirabeau, especially the one dated July 17th. This had crossed his written the day before, and which obtained his father's approbation. His feelings on this occasion appear in the following reply:—

"Dear, good, compassionate, generous, but this once unjust uncle, I received your letter dated July 17th. It reached me at a moment when my soul was beginning to smile at the first beam of hope, and my expanding and grateful heart had brought me to the feet of my assisting wife, to your own, and to those of her father and my own. When I was becoming a better man because I felt myself less unhappy—when I was assuming a new existence, for which the hands of justice and repentance were occupied in forming a new soul, your letter came; it shall not destroy my reso-

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated July 27th 1780.

lutions, though it forms a cruel contrast with them. It is the fruit of my past transgressions; its juice is bitter and disheartening; but I despair and drink.

" A reply to it is, however, due from me, and I will write my reply at this very time, when I am afflicted with fever, and an inflammation of the face has absolutely closed one of my eyes. I will write it, without order, in those points that grieve me most; and I will write it artlessly. You may scold me again if you please, but I will show you the naked heart of your nephew. It is he who seeks for that pardon which he would fain deserve—he and no one else. He has no pretensions to perfection, nor has he a right to set up any; but he has a right to show himself straightforward and sincere. If, such as he is, you are of opinion that he deserves death, very well, my dear uncle, he will die—that's all. He will die with feelings of the most painful regret for his faults towards his father, and the grief he has occasioned you; but regretting none of the steps he has taken to save himself, and for which you will condemn him. By an act of candour which has displeased you, but for which he thought you would have esteemed him, he refrained from deceiving you. He threw himself into your arms, because he knows your kindness of heart to be inexhaustible, and he sued for pardon because he felt that he was guilty. Had he not felt this, think you, dear uncle, that he would have

remained much more unhappy than he is at present without uttering a word?

"I ought not, you say, to attribute to bad advice the faults that constitute my disgrace and misfortune, because I have never taken advice. I am aware, my dear uncle, that bad advice could not justify me; but were I capable of being excused it might excuse me. But I do not excuse myself: I implore mercy, and my present pride is a will to make atonement. Would you stifle this pride?

"I have *taken* very little advice, it is true, but I have *received* a great deal. I have received it, too, charged with every possible temptation, and combined with recitals calculated to inflame and poison a mind without experience, and a suffering heart. These counsels threw me into a cruel delirium, and my blows fell upon others as upon myself. As I inflicted them I grieved; and now that my eyes are more open, I grieve still more. Therefore, I do not defend myself; I only supplicate.

"But I entreat, above all things, that feelings may not be attributed to me which I do not possess. Let none of the faults be imputed to me that are repulsive to my heart; those of which I am really guilty are quite sufficient.

"Whenever I have made protestations to you, they have been sincere; and may God preserve you

from ever being so angry, as I am profoundly afflicted at the circumstances that have made me swerve from them in spite of myself.

" I have been culpable, my dear uncle, but I am so no longer, for my heart is wholly imbued with good and virtuous feelings. I have been guilty, but am not corrupt, for I am not debased. The love I feel for the nobler virtues, you may term pride if you will; and I admit that I never was less likely to be corrected of such pride.

" I have thought it right not to mix anything with my prayers and supplications. I was bound to state my sufferings to my wife, so as to leave her all the credit of coming to my relief from her own generosity. She has obtained that credit, dear uncle, and why should it excite your envy?

" Why would you have me weep like a coward, at what I endure; and with my father, and my father-in-law, and my wife, bear only the appearance of a man who has not courage to suffer that which, after all, he has deserved to suffer? I shall do no such thing. Pain and death shall not induce me to pronounce a word of weakness. It is only when I am beyond these walls, if ever I leave them; it is only when people can no longer think that interest guides my pen and my tongue, that I shall and ought to humble myself.

"I most sincerely repent; and be assured, dear uncle, that my repentance must be great indeed for me, in my present state of misfortune, to confess it, as I do, to every body. Be assured, likewise, that gratitude drives repentance much deeper into a heart than vengeance does.

"Pardon my having been deeply pained by several passages in your letter; but allow me to state, in the overflowing of my heart, how much I was affected by a sentence in which yours speaks. Excellent man!—you possess all my veneration and all my tenderness. You find it tiresome, you say, constantly to refuse all aid to a man to whom, even before he was born, you had dedicated your laborious life. You will not add to my sorrow that of having no reply from you to my letters! My tears fell fast upon this part of your letter as I read it. Oh, my dear uncle, I fully appreciate your kindness and sacrifices. How strongly am I bound to dedicate to you my second life, after your having so often granted me aid, and after my second father has restored to me my first.

"This is the sole object of my ambition. My life is now too far advanced for me to aim at great success; but I can still fulfil domestic duties, and I thirst after them. I require indulgence and a little esteem. To deserve these I shall apply that which, had I been more prudent, I should have devoted to a more lofty

career. I might have been greater, but my faults will make me better; my having to make people forget them is a powerful stimulus.

"The more I see a hope of this, the more eager I become. Madame de Mirabeau's interference changes my situation. If I could move her, when I was bound to her by no debt of gratitude, I must move her more when my heart is under the excitement caused by her kindness. Will you allow her alone to sue for me? I trust not. I flatter myself that, notwithstanding your cruel and so often-repeated *but*, you are convinced of my repentance. Oh! convince also my father. Restore to me a portion of his kindness; I prefer it to freedom, rank, fortune—every thing: I place your friendship alone in the same parallel*."

This appeal made a strong impression upon the Bailli.

"Your letter," was his reply, "begins with three epithets which I have used every effort to deserve, without ever having dared to hope that I had succeeded. But I surely never deserved the fourth. God knows that I never asked him for anything with greater fervour than not to be unjust; and in this respect I flatter myself that my prayer has been granted, so far as human weakness can correspond with heavenly

* Unpublished Letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated August 12th 1780.

grace. I will further add, that you should be the last person to consider me unjust.

" I have already informed you, and you have yourself remarked, that I am far from wishing to add to your misfortunes. This stops and greatly impedes my pen. Nevertheless, you make me feel that I have clouded the beam of hope which shone brightly before you. I will not overwhelm you; neither will I give you hopes that I cannot realise.

" I have pointed out to you the only means by which you can obtain relief: this is all I can do. If you possessed in a less degree the art of persuasion, you would persuade me to do more. You know me well enough to be aware that my heart is not formed to be either severe or mistrustful; but you have forced it to mistrust you; and you have compelled your father to overcome his goodness, and even a predilection, perhaps too strong in your favour. How often have you before made the very same protestations!

" Far from opposing anything that may be done in your favour, I repeat to you that I have pointed out the only means by which you can obtain any relief. I can do no more. It would be highly imprudent on my part to offer myself to your father as security for your future conduct; and I cannot really intercede without charging myself with the consequences.

" You may look upon what I write as reproaches; yet, if you take it as it is meant, you will think other-

wise. There is too much cleverness in your letters for the heart to play a principal part, and yet the heart alone can deserve the epithets of *straightforward* and *sincere.*

" I want no answer to the question I am about to ask you, because any concealment would vex me, and true repentence never conceals anything. Answer the question to yourself, as you are suffering the punishment which you admit you have deserved,—would you dare to confess to your father, and to me who have no right over you, everything that you have done, every letter that you have written? Nobody imputes to you faults which you have not committed. I here stop, for I do not wish to distress you. Of this you may be assured,—you mistake yourself, and confound pride with greatness of soul.

" I conclude with repeating, though I regret doing so, what I once before said: that it is irksome to be constantly refusing all assistance to one to whom, even before he was born, I had dedicated all that I could do *."

At the very time the Bailli was writing this last letter, Mirabeau was renewing his touching appeals.

" I hope," he wrote to his uncle, " that you will be more and more satisfied with me. Pain, privation, and

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1780.

despair have soured my naturally unbending temper. This has almost always been the cause of my errors of all kinds. I thought I perceived nothing around me but enmity and misfortune; I mistook the punishment I deserved for the effects of a hatred that had no existence, and it roused me to resistance. I aggravated my first faults, and from fault to punishment, from punishment to madness, I came to deserve my misfortunes.

"My conscience, nevertheless, has always cried aloud in favour of my father, and against myself. But even in loving my parent and detesting my own conduct, I did not do him entire justice: there, where I ought to have seen nothing but his prudence and equity, my heart was ulcerated by his severity. It is to your good counsels and those of a friend * upon whom I bestow the highest eulogium, when I say that he is worthy to co-operate with yourself in giving me advice, that I am really indebted for this return to proper feelings, and for seeing my situation in a light the more painful, because I find myself not less loaded with crime than with misfortune. Thus it is that reason and a natural sense of justice have placed me at the feet of everybody. But you who know your nephew, may easily conceive that I have ventured to bend only one knee: I have not dared to show the whole extent of my reflections, the whole depth of my

* Dupont de Nemours.

repentance. I have not been withheld by false shame. When a man has done wrong, nothing noble remains but the avowal and the pardon ; but neither is noble if the guilty man acts with a knife at his throat. I have often thought of forming a resolution to die—and to do so with the regret of having made no atonement—of not even having shown to its full extent the tormenting wish I had of making atonement. This resolution I have often thought of forming, rather than be suspected of cowardice, of baseness, of being unable to bear my burthen, or of becoming supple from interested motives.

" The step taken by my wife and your letters are beginning to relieve me from such thoughts. They show me from afar the day when I can publicly appear in accord with myself, and when, by saying all I think, and doing all in my power to please those who have reason to complain of me, I shall have no reason to fear being suspected of base motives for a change of conduct. These hopes have already relaxed the rigidity of my disposition, which they have both softened and improved. Like a craw-fish, I am casting my old shell to appear in a new skin ; but this effect has been produced only by the mildness of spring—it could never have been effected by the severity of winter.

" It is not your *scolding* in itself that appears *harsh ;* you, especially, may scold me much more harshly without my taking it amiss. Your justice [illegible]er stricken

me without your having poured a drop of balm into the wound. But it is the perpetual and painful *but,* which always pervades your remonstrances, that brings despair into my heart, because by all my thoughts and feelings—by all that I have of life and perception, I am told that it is unjust.

" You are anxious that my conversion should be full and complete. That of the heart is just as you wish. That of my sayings and actions are still impeded by my situation; nor can it be otherwise where I am; but the consolation you afford me helps on its progress. I must, however, tell you, that although I have committed very blameable actions, I have never had a corrupt heart. It has been misled by passions greatly to be lamented, and these have been fomented by a mind seduced, soured, and irritated.

" I much regret that you dare not become my pledge, and the more so because I feel that I should do you justice—my plan of conduct being to give myself up wholly to your counsels. Experience has taught me that they alone would always have been useful to me.

" But if you dare not become security for me, who will? I think that to you alone of the family, am I known. Whether you consent or whether you refuse to be my pledge, I shall not the less follow your advice, nor conceive myself less bound to act as if I lay under this additional obligation to you.

" You see that there is nothing in my existence to

feed that pride which you impute to me, and I feel this but too keenly. When I confess my errors, you talk of my 'honeyed accents.' See then whether I have not good reason to fear the colouring which my captivity may give to what I say. I always thought myself likely to be accused of anything rather than of being *honeyed.* When I speak to you it is with the accent of the heart, which mingles with my expressions much respect, tenderness, and veneration, because my heart is full of them:—but to say that my accents are 'honeyed,' oh, fie*!"

We give only a short extract from the Bailli's reply to this letter. This kind-hearted old man, whose severity was more affected than real, was evidently beginning to melt.

"I cannot undertake to answer every point in your letter, because I should commit the fault I am anxious to avoid, that of unnecessarily finding fault with you. It would be a sort of cruelty to censure you merely from intemperance of tongue or pen, or from pure pedantry. I cannot nor will I aid you in a direct manner—I have already told you so. I have, perhaps, too fully explained my reasons, why my being your security would throw too heavy a responsibility upon my shoulders. But

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated August 18th 1780.

continue to better yourself, for I cannot conceal from you that the chances are in your favour *."

Mirabeau had not waited for this advice, but had already written to his sister, Madame du Saillant, the only one of the family who had constantly resided with the Marquis. This lady had never once incurred her father's displeasure even for an instant, which is to be attributed to her own happy disposition and amiable temper, as well as to the mildness and prudence of her husband, and to the services he had rendered his father-in-law, who esteemed him accordingly.

We insert Mirabeau's letter.

" It must surely be known to you, my dear sister, that my wife has written to my father to intreat him to mitigate my sufferings, and in the hope of obtaining for me, from his clemency and humanity, a half freedom at least, for which I shall be as grateful as I am sincerely and deeply repentant of the faults that have placed me within the gloomy walls whence I now write.

" I trust that this circumstance has afforded you some pleasure. I have had so many proofs of your goodness of heart, that, in the agonies which mine has suffered, I have wished a thousand times that the rest

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1780.

of the family were like you. But you are the only one of whom my father has never had reason to complain, and who have never injured yourself nor any one else. I have been less fortunate: easy of access and proud, of a feeling heart, but choleric, imprudent, thoughtless, my errors drew upon me misfortunes which, joined to insidious suggestions, irritated my mind, and rendered me deserving of what I have endured.

" In a gloomy prison, in a long and tedious solitude, and under the burthen of the grief and infirmities they have brought upon me, a tardy reason has at length enlightened my mind. I carried its first homage to the feet of my father, my uncle, my wife, and my father-in-law; but, for a considerable time, this was of no avail, and, so long as I remained without hope, I was unwilling to communicate my sufferings to a beloved and compassionate sister. But now that Madame de Mirabeau has begun to lend me her aid, I know you sufficiently to be persuaded that you will not refuse to co-operate in my behalf. Among my numerous faults, I have never committed that, my dear sister, of refusing to do you justice; and I have always tenderly loved you. I had been set against your husband, and I had the misfortune to yield, with all the impetuosity I then possessed, to every evil suggestion made against him. I deeply regret this; but I think him of too noble a disposition to keep up his resentment

against an unhappy brother-in-law in misfortune, who was deceived, laments having been so, has returned to his duty, is corrected, and repents of the past. Should he join with you in rendering me assistance, like yourself and your sister-in-law, he would have the most honourable claim to my gratitude, the obligations of which it shall be my delight to fulfil.

"The real service I require is, that all those who do some sort of justice to my repentance and my honour, will try also to obtain a place for me in my father's affection. This, of all my wants, affects me the most, and is the most imperious. True I do not deserve it, and have lost the right to it given me by nature; but I have not lost the desire of having it restored to me. I feel the privation of it dreadfully, and I will die rather than not reconquer my father's regard. In this place, I cannot advance towards the accomplishment of my desire; in this place, where a bad construction is put upon every becoming sentiment that I utter, I can do nothing good or useful. All that I feel is disavowed. Help me then, dearest sister, to leave these walls; and if my future conduct one day makes my father forget the past, you will have conferred a benefit not only upon me but upon himself. His heart is not formed for hatred; mine loves him, and bleeds at his feet. Take pity upon me. I will kiss the hand you stretch forth to me, and also that which you place upon his

bosom when supplicating in behalf of your unhappy brother *."

After a very long silence, and the most unjust suspicions and complaints against a sister who had never deserved them, the above letter was a reparation due to Madame du Saillant.

" You do me justice, my dear brother," was her reply, " in supposing that I have derived great pleasure from seeing your excellent wife interceding with my father to obtain some mitigation of your misfortunes. This was the surest way to be of service to you, for she is the most powerful mediatrix you could have. I am no less touched at the mark of confidence you have just given me by conferring upon me the right of being useful to you. It proves that you do me justice, and that you do not reject the affection for you which would have made me fly to the assistance of an unhappy brother, could I have done so in spite of himself.

" I should do the greatest injustice to my husband if I allowed anything to be attributed to myself that proceeded from his mind and noble heart. All that he has done at any time, or wished to do for my brothers, with a zeal and warmth not habitual to his outward disposition, but belonging to his heart, originated entirely with himself. He is equally incapable of

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated Augus[illegible] 17[illegible].

inflicting and of suffering an injury; and I have seen him much affected at being the object of a public accusation*, which, without proceeding from you, appeared not unknown to you, for your defence was there taken. As we had never mentioned the subject to each other, I had reason to fear that, from regard for me, he concealed the resentment he felt. Never having, however, used any other artifice with each other than that of concealing nothing from one another, and being unable to hide my emotion on receiving a letter from my heretofore lost brother, I took it to him immediately, and his reply was to offer his own house as the place of trial, and his presence as security. Thus all is told with reference to him. He is no less desirous than I am of having it in his power to contribute in making you happier, and of seeing you persuaded that the feelings of both are the same. By this post I shall write to my uncle and to my sister-in-law, according to the dictates of my feelings, urging them to concert measures to do you a real service, as well with her father as with ours, whose heart, blighted for a long time past by intense grief, would easily revive at the first ray of confidence by which it was penetrated. I alone could not bring about so happy a revolution. I anxiously

* This is an allusion to some very violent passages in the Cases and Statements published on behalf of the Marchioness of Mirabeau.

wish and hope for it, from your present feelings and the conduct you intend to pursue in future. We cannot yet bring forward, in support of our application to him, any meritorious act you may have performed; but we must trust to his goodness and beneficent justice. At all events, be assured that I would purchase, at the expense of my blood, the certainty of your happiness, the renewal of peace in our family, and the satisfaction of our excellent father*."

Mirabeau, delighted with this reply, lost no time in writing to his sister a second letter, to which the Marquis applied the term *ecstatic.*

"I yield to the overflowings of my heart, and shall call you, as you call me, my tender, amiable, and excellent sister. Your letter has kindled in me the deepest emotion, and, for the first time after a long and cruel interval, I have shed tears of joy. I thought their source dried up in me: intense pain produces none, remorse and sorrow produce none; the emotion that draws them forth is a salutary one. I fully expected that you would restore to me some part of your affection, but not the whole, as you have done. You are right, my kind sister; to have done it partially would not have been worthy of you. I am your brother, and am penitent and unfortunate. But I was

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* Unpublished Letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated August 23rd 1780.

not the brother of your husband (but I will and ought to be so); therefore his conduct is most noble. I must confess to you, that he has as deeply affected as he has surprised me; not that I thought him below himself, but I never was so fully conscious of the wrongs I had inflicted upon him as at the moment he forgot them.

" My dear, kind sister, throw yourself into his arms, and say to him—you may easily guess what. Oh! how much shall I gain by having such an interpreter as yourself. Tell him more especially that if I do not write to him he would do me a horrible injustice by attributing it to any other feelings than those due to him from me, and to the awkwardness of expressing them after events so difficult and so cruel to allude to at present. I have stated this to the dear and valued friend* who has led me to the feet of my family. Repentance pleases me, but excuses pain and embarrass me. How could I efface all traces of my faults, if, by avowing, I constantly recal them to mind? I would embrace the knees of all, and my eyes alone should speak: every one would then be satisfied, persuaded, convinced!

" I know not, dear sister, what will be the success of the negociation in which you have the generosity to

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* Dupont de Nemours.

concur; but this I know, I could not have a more amiable mediatrix, one dearer to my father, or more according to his own heart. I further know that your letter, the step you have taken, and the kindness of your husband, give you both an eternal claim upon me —a claim more sacred than even that of nature; and you cannot either of you deem me so perverse, as to warrant your fearing that I shall ever cease to respect such a claim.

"A man of your own blood, dear sister,—a man warmed by your kindness, and whose mind has been formed by such sad experience, will not belie your pledge, if you dare venture to give it in his behalf. For my own part, I should be proud to have for my *guard* and mentor, my elder (be not offended!) and excellent sister, who, amid so many tempests, never despaired of my salvation, nor of my honour, nor of my resolutions; who gives me so many marks of tender affection, although I have deeply wronged her, and who will say some day,—'I opened our father's heart towards him; I have converted and saved him. Is it strange, therefore, that he should love us, and behave well?'

"My dear sister, complete your kindness, and give me news of my father—of that father to whom I dare not write, and whom I have never loved so dearly as since I have been deprived of the right of telling him so. Tell me what effect my letters produce upon

him. Criticise and advise me. Assume, in short, the direction of my case, since you are so kind as to serve and treat as a brother an unhappy being, who will ever feel it an honour to be indebted to you, and to cherish and respect you*."

Meanwhile, Mirabeau continued to write to his uncle, whose letters we cease to transcribe, or even to give the substance of, because they offer little more than repetitions of what the reader has already seen.

The following is one of Mirabeau's letters:—

"I have received your two letters of the 18th and 28th of August, and I confess that, if I did not believe and attend to what you say in them, discouragement would deprive me of the power of replying; but I attend to and believe in the dictates of your heart.

"You always calculate my future conduct by my past errors. Now is it possible that I can ever return to the same age? Is it possible I can ever find myself similarly situated? Is it possible that so many misfortunes and so long a captivity can have been of no use to me?

"In a situation like that into which I have been thrown for several years past, a man becomes either prudent or entirely mad. I surely am not the latter, and have never felt further removed from it. My

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*Unpublished Letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th 1780.

becoming so would not, however, be impossible, if, after the ray of hope that has shone before me, I were thrown back for ever into despair. But which of my relatives, which of my natural protectors, can consent that I should be driven back when I am striving to do something praiseworthy; that I should be condemned to die in despair, deprived, perhaps, of reason?"....

"You are not this relative, neither is my father. I have the strongest reasons for believing that this noble and benevolent parent is secretly holding out to me a helping hand*; that his prudent goodness has long been placing the signal light upon the shore, near which I am struggling against rocks and billows. If ever I succeed in reaching that shore, he and you will have principally contributed to save me, and I shall more than twice be indebted to him for existence.

"I can never believe that my kind uncle sees without emotion or interest the change which his advice and my repentance have produced in my situation, and the hopes to which they have given birth. I no longer ask you alone to be my security: my wife my sister, my brother-in-law, and my friend are pleading in my behalf. They think, no doubt, that I shall not disgrace their recommendations, since they grant

* Mirabeau rightly guessed that Madame du Saillant's letters, which were written under the eyes of the Marquis, were written under his dictation also.

them to me. You, my dear uncle, need only yield with the others, and draw them on by the force of your example. The example of pardon is so noble!

"You reproach me always with my letters being 'too clever.' I have great difficulty in believing this; and God forbid that I should attempt to make them so! I write much more from my heart than from my head, and I only endeavour to express clearly my thoughts and feelings. I might do so with more warmth, but people have a justifiable prejudice against such warmth. Be that as it may, I lament my errors. I wish them to be forgotten, and I will atone for them if possible. I love to be under obligations to my father, my wife, yourself, and all those I have offended*."

Notwithstanding these submissive and affecting letters, Dupont was still alarmed. Boucher kept up Mirabeau's courage.

"My friend," wrote Boucher, "a man ought always to appear a man; and at your age you must not speak like a blubbering school-boy, who is made to say, 'I will do so no more†.'"

The Bailli continued timidly to urge his brother in

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* Unpublished Letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated 12th September 1780.

† Unpublished Letter from Boucher to Mirabeau, dated 2nd August 1780,

Mirabeau's favour, professing at the same time that he would offer no advice on the subject.

"This man," he says, "is much less of an actor than I supposed, notwithstanding his talent for performing parts. It appears to me that misfortune has corrected him, and he is repentant. He is almost the only pivot upon which his family turns: to leave him there would be to annihilate your race, and the idea of its destruction is dreadful to me. He has grievously erred, but he has also been punished. It is for you to weigh all this in your mind*."

"I have received another letter from the Count, who is assuredly one of the deepest fellows I know. He will take no denial, and has got it into his head, notwithstanding all I can say to the contrary, that I am always to be his confidant, and security for his good behaviour. The mode he employs is by no means a bad one, and I am obliged to take great care lest I should accede to his wishes†."

"The Count has sent me a copy of his letter to you. I see that the fellow now throws himself upon you, and tries to persuade himself that you are the accomplice of Saillanette (Madame du Saillant), without

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* Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 10th 1780.

† Unpublished Letter from the same to the same, dated September 10th 1780.

wishing to appear so. He evidently hopes to make you so by degrees; and, to tell you the truth, I do not blame him, for it is natural he should try to get out of his cage. But I find that he is too clever, and I should fear that the heart plays but a secondary part*."

We insert the letter to the Bailli to which the latter here alludes.

"I have the honour to send you a copy of the letter which I have received from my sister, Madame du Saillant. It gave me extreme pleasure; I owe it to your kindness to tell you so, and my heart loves to pour into your bosom the pleasures it receives. You who have listened to the tale of my sufferings—whose courageous and tender reason has enlightened my path, purified my mind, and guided my footsteps,—will rejoice to see your good work prosper.

"I venture to assure you that the work you have wrought in my bosom prospers even more than your generous endeavours to improve my situation.

"A thought has arisen in my mind and makes my heart beat, for it is encouraged by several passages in your letters: it is that you consult with my father, and that he takes some share in the advice which, it is true, you would have given me without his aid, but

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* Unpublished Letter from the same to the same, dated September 12th 1780.

which is only dearer to me for coming from both of you. If I am not wrong in this pleasing conjecture, suppose and reply that your nephew has more feeling, repentance, gratitude, and love than you could have supposed. All these feelings which I owe to my father, have I not acquired through you likewise? Have I not two fathers? My heart proclaims it, and it is confirmed by my moistened eyes *."

This consoling supposition was not incorrect: though, slowly, the Marquis had advanced a step.

" I remark," he wrote to the Bailli, " and without saying a word, the system of that madman. He hits as hard as he can, when he is *making style.* You know that the tender and the beautiful are synonymous in these times. He is acting, and, perhaps, deceives himself even the first. If he were asked what he means by *atonement,* and his plans tending thereto—supposing him sincere—he would state very well those by which he might resume his situation in life—those regarding his wife, he would state the wrong way; beyond this, he would talk and act like a madman †."

" If you call re-uniting the husband and wife the point to which I should not be sorry for being urged, I

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated September 1st 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated September 1st 1780.

think with you, that it is at their own risk, peril, and fortune. But the greater the influence I might possess in it, the greater regret I should feel had I given any other impetus towards this object than stating, when the matter was mentioned to me, what I conceived to be good sense. At present I have not to give my reflections any great turn-about, for I had foreseen all; and when the letter to his sister came, I had a sort of female sedition around me — for women are always prompt to hope, and to pass emotion from hand to hand, as the money given by the courier is handed from postilion to postilion, without inquiring whence it comes, whither it is going, what is its amount, and how long it will last *."

Thus the plan conceived by the Marquis of Mirabeau began to be unfolded; for he had hitherto concealed it even from his brother, for whom, nevertheless, he had the tenderest affection, and in whom he placed the greatest confidence. The whole project was at length explained in the following letter:—

" When, after the loss of our poor little Victor, it was necessary that I should turn round, though pressed upon by the hand of Providence, you said enough to convince me that, although you appeared occupied solely about me, you thought and felt as I did concern-

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 4th 1780.

ing the extinction of our race; for, notwithstanding we reason ourselves into submission and resignation, the impression remains and cannot be effaced. I long reflected upon the matter. It is certain that if my grandson had lived, I should never have swerved from the word I gave to keep the father in prison, and even to lose all traces of him *. But at that period, my friends, or rather that race of cold-blooded frogs which at Paris are termed friends, were either tired or alarmed. I was myself offuscated by that black smoke which mounts to the brain and enervates the heart. I, therefore, took my measures alone. Having formed my plan, I told Caroline † to request Dupont‡ the next time he went to Paris to see the man of the police §, and also to undertake the whole matter herself. She thrust herself into the business forthwith. Dupont has intellect and talent, but he is all of a piece: his mind is romantic, and he is always occupied about himself and about the part he is playing in any matter, which stamps him with inferiority. He is, therefore, no match for Caroline, and she governs him as she pleases. As soon as I knew the plans of the fellow ||, the letters

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* The Marquis afterwards repeated this assertion in another letter written to his brother on the 10th of March 1782. In it he says: —" If my poor grandson had lived, his father would have been still in prison."

† Madame du Saillant.

‡ Dupont de Nemours.

§ Boucher.

|| Mirabeau.

began. I know not how this man has managed to gain over his superiors, but they are all wholly devoted to him. You know their mad and whimsical compliance with his wishes, and this rendered the working of the vessel so much easier. Dupont laboured on, and assured us that he could bring back that sinning mind, which would bend only to his father and uncle. That man's star had killed his child * at nurse, and the mother brought all her romance into play, to reconcile us and his wife † to him. He was, therefore, told how to act; he nicked the joint with his usual ardour; his letters remained without reply, but they became more pressing, more submissive, and more natural. I had long been of opinion that the world would soon be at an end if madmen did not engender; that, whilst I was alive, things would hold together, but the moment my eyes were closed this man would be let loose. The age for persons of his sort to live in is arriving with rapid strides; there is no woman now-a-days who does not bear in her womb a Van Arteveld, or a Masaniello.

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* Sophie-Gabrielle.

† We have a proof of this fact in the following passage:—" I have received a letter from Madame de Monnier who speaks of you, and invokes your testimony regarding the efforts she is making to induce the Count to follow my advice. She is really an interesting lady. I have often thought that romantic women are much better than men, even when the latter are romantic like themselves."—*Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Boucher, dated July 14th* 1779.

In three months, therefore, you would see him obtain letters of abolition, make his creditors' finger-joints crack, and figure away at Versailles. I made up my mind therefore, and had it suggested to him to write to his sister,—for all such fellows have nothing but what others inspire them with. This one, with a great deal of what is termed intellect, is positively nothing but what others make him. Violent passions lead either to great crimes or to heroic virtues; there is no middle course for such people. All his heroism, at present, can consist only in conquering himself and remaining supple. All this will tell you that he wrote only at the moment I thought proper that he should write; and that I did not think proper he should do so until I resolved to save him, if circumstances yielded to such a consummation, and I could conscientiously promote it. I think then that, for his own purpose as well as ours, he must be liberated after trial. His purpose is to recover his social condition and be reconciled to his wife; ours is to have a family from their reconciliation. Such is the real state of the case. Moreover, I have told myself every day that it is unjust I should keep any secrets from you, who are the angel of judgment, whilst I am his trumpeter;—from you who are one of those men of whom the Doctor *

* Quesnay.

said that one and one make a hundred and eleven ;—from you who, when I announced ' The Friend of Men,' pointed him out ;—from you, who enter body and soul into all that relates to race and lineage. There is no finessing with your powerful and mature judgment ; therefore, I have always taken care duly to communicate to you all and several the measures, documents, and incidents connected with this business *."

Although the Marquis had fully made up his mind, he wished to graduate the trial which Mirabeau was to undergo ; and not yield, like others, to the sway of affection—for he felt none towards his son.

" In truth, I foresaw that, unless I took especial care, this man would come out after I was gone ; I foresaw that the fellow, who, in 1771, when speaking for the first time to M. de Maurepas, who was as mad as he, seized that minister by a button of his doublet, and who now rules his own immediate superiors, would not be held long. I therefore considered myself in the light of an old gaoler ; and, as I was in duty bound, when they came to me, I directed the whole affair towards his wife, because, in fact, they will have to settle the matter between them. Nevertheless, I perceive, in all the gentleman's letters, that, as transitions

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 6th 1780.

cost him nothing, he is butting directly against me; and, as he always wants the impossible thing, I may tell you in confidence, that he has precisely found it in this instance. But, therefore, I feel my strength; all weakness on my part is the generosity of the lion. I will show him that to forgive and to forget are not the same thing; and some day, when you can say to me 'upon my honour and conscience, I affirm to you that your son has the head of a wise man and the soul of a hero,' then I will see him. Until that period he shall not look upon his father's face. I do not think I am saying too much; and, besides, it is proper that this should be an object of emulation to him, which he will not lose the hope of attaining *."

"This gentleman is spanking along at his own pace, thinking to drag us along with him. Not but all these women would send me forward at the same speed, if I let them have their way. When they praised his letter to his wife, I said only: 'Take him his soup, that he may eat it;' an allusion to an anecdote of our grotesque cousin the Marquis of Chamarau. He had sent to the bishop for permission to eat meat. No sooner was his messenger gone than the devout epicure began to calculate the time. 'Ah! there he is—now he

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 8th 1786.

is arrived—he asks—he has obtained. Ha! who waits there?—bring me my meat soup that I may eat it.* "'

The essential condition of Mirabeau's release, that is to say, the consent of the Marquis of Marignane and his daughter, or, more strictly speaking, a demand made by them, was not easy of fulfilment. The Countess of Mirabeau shows this in the following letter:—

"I see your goodness of heart in the application you have made in favour of M. de Mirabeau. I will talk to you about this with the strictest candour. I have so strong an attachment to the family into which I have entered that I feel the most lively grief at seeing the eldest born of that family in the unhappy situation to which he is reduced. I would give my life's blood to see him prudent and happy; but my kind sister, what can I do to effect this? You would not surely advise me to give the public a subject of ridicule, by going to your brother, without even knowing what are his present feelings towards me. I must first show to my father your letter, and another from M. de Mirabeau written in the most amicable strain. I will not permit myself to examine whether I ought to believe in the latter: I feel that it is my duty to intercede for him, and I will try to fulfil it. But I confess to you that it

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 8th 1780.

is a terrible task for me to talk to my father about M. de Mirabeau's letters, because we never agree as to what I am to say or do. He flies into a passion, and after I have written several letters without satisfying him, he is sure to disapprove of the one I send at last*."

Mirabeau's letters expressed greater hope and confidence than he had reason to feel, or probably did feel. After a rigorous imprisonment of three years and a quarter, he had not yet reached the point to which all his efforts and solicitations tended; nevertheless, far from yielding to discouragement, he daily renewed his exertions. In transcribing a few pages more of his letters, our only object is to give the fullest possible development to Mirabeau's character, and show how much sensibility he still possessed, though his heart had been seared by injustice and persecution. His kindly nature was worthy of his great genius; and, taking into consideration the good qualities that outweighed his natural defects and overcame his evil destiny, let us deplore without bitterness, and judge without excess

* Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant dated September 14th 1780. We at first thought of inserting Mirabeau's letter to which his wife alludes, it being a remarkable production as a mixture of art and sensibility; but upon reflection we have omitted it, because it would only further incumber our narrative. Besides, the well-known circumstances of the subsequent divorce leave no subject of interest or curiosity in the letters which passed between the husband and wife.

of severity, the errors into which he was led, still more by the fault of others than by his own passions.

The following is another letter from Mirabeau to his sister :—

" I forgot, dear and kind sister, to send you a copy of my letter to Madame de Mirabeau ; and I now repair the omission. This is a habit I wish to assume ; I mean that of sending you copies of my letters. You will make a proper use of them. If ever I write a foolish thing, my good sister, on seeing the blunder, will endeavour to repair it ; if I do well, she will make the most of it. Enclosed are the letters I have written to my wife and uncle. To the latter I have sent a copy of your charming communication. I had delayed doing this because I have been, and am still, afflicted with putrid fever. I have cut short the complaint with phosphorus. You perceive that your poor brother still requires incendiary remedies, but only physically. I have ventured also to write to my father. I do not inclose a copy of that letter, as I trust you will see the original.

" I am really beginning to flatter myself that some of my troubles are nearly at an end ; for all sorts of pleasures are coming to me in succession. They were preceded by a great mark of indulgence from my father, owing to my repentance. He gave me intimation of this through my uncle. Of all these

pleasures, that renew my existence, my father's half-mute kindness is the one I feel the most. Then again, my uncle has lectured me with great severity, through which his extreme kindness of heart always peered forth. Under great harshness of expression, he conceals the extreme of sensibility and goodness. I wrote to my father-in-law: he might have left me without a reply, but I have had the happiness of receiving reproaches from him : I say happiness, because war between honest people must always end in peace.

. "I throw myself into your arms and into those of your sister-in-law, and I hope for every thing from your zeal and her activity. She is naturally not very active, but you will make her so. You two, when united, can make the whole world do as you please. What renders virtue so powerful is that she is at the same time good and beautiful.*"

The Countess and her father did not continue to reply to Mirabeau's letters; the Bailli did not venture to intercede with them, nor indeed could he well have done so.

"Although there is an appearance of intimacy between that house and me, there is so little warmth in

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 1st 1780.

them that we place very little confidence in each other*. When I am at Mirabeau, they would let the sky fall upon their heads before they would write to me. A person who does not reside in the same town that they do, is as far from them as if he were in America. When I meet them at present, I never mention the matter at all; for having begun by showing them all the letters I received, and finding that they did not act in the same manner towards me, I stopped short. It is not from want of confidence on their parts, but from indolence, and perhaps from aversion in the father. The daughter is very much embarrassed to play her part: she wishes her husband to recover his freedom, but knows not how to do, nor dares to do, nor does anything †."

Mirabeau, uneasy at his wife's silence, again wrote to her, enclosing his letter in the following to Madame du Saillant.

"I send you, dear sister, a letter I have just written to Madame de Mirabeau. Her silence grieves me. During the moments when my eyes are opening to the twilight of hope, the merest trifle might throw me back into utter darkness. Has her intercession with my father

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 16th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 20th 1780.

proved only the impulse of an ephemeral and sterile compassion?—I candidly confess to you my fears. I still flatter myself that she will be moved by my perseverance; for when a kind heart is once touched, it soon expands. It is gratifying to me again to express my sense of your generous and indulgent friendship. Receive once more the most tender assurances of it*."

It has already been stated that the project of liberation was made to depend upon the consent of the Marquis of Marignane and his daughter. The Marquis of Mirabeau himself had written to them upon the subject †; but the lady's father had strong prejudices against his son-in-law—prejudices instilled into his mind by interested collaterals, whilst excessive timidity withheld the Countess of Mirabeau from showing any opposition to her father's feelings. Had she really been attached to her husband, she would have overcome this timidity; but such affection was not in Emily's nature. During a period of seven years she had not only enjoyed but revelled in the freedom of a species of widowhood, embellished by splendid fêtes, each day renewed, of which she was the principal ornament; and she dreaded perhaps the approaching prospect of a

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 6th 1780.

† Case and counsel's opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau, Aix, 1783. Mouret, page 38.

retired life, without opulence and its attendant pleasures, after the liberation and return of her husband.

These delays threw a gloom of despondency over Mirabeau's mind.

"My dear sister," he wrote, "I greatly needed your letter of September 6th; it has alleviated the deep and poignant affliction produced by very unfavourable news I have received in this horrible dungeon, where I am condemned to every kind of impotency. My uncle has never written to me so harshly, and in a manner so well calculated to deprive me of all hope, and even of all my courage, (if the latter could be annihilated,) as since my conscience has told me that I deserve something better.

"As I was just reading over and over again the underlined passage in your letter, a reflection struck me, sad and affecting, and which infinitely increased my emotion. With the sole exception of yourself, I have not had a kind, encouraging or consolatory word from any body but my father. Good God! am I no longer known? Is it thus, that they are forcing me to fling myself into the flames? My father—they may say what they please, but my father is the only person who has just grounds for uttering dreadful reproaches; yet, he is the only person who utters none, or at least utters them with that paternal and noble moderation, which places the balm by the side of the wound. Alas!

I am very unfortunate and very guilty at having misunderstood him:—but is an unhappy and repentant man to be crushed and abandoned? Let what will be the thought of my heart, it is better than that.

"I thought I understood my uncle's language—I thought I knew it well;—but I know it no longer. A candid and noble expression, he terms 'pride;' one submissive and modest, he calls 'falseness,' and 'honeyed verbiage.' He even reproaches me with my 'cleverness,' as if my father's son could write like a fool; as if it were not a desirable thing that a person whom it is wished to reform, should be 'very clever'; and as if a man had no other good quality than 'the extent of his intellect.' Gracious heaven!—so teazing and cruel is this, that I never felt so much like a fool as I do now. I do not love to meditate when my heart ought and is willing to speak; and I, who usually let my pen run on, could sooner have solved a problem in transcendental mathematics, than have replied to my uncle. I enclose one of his letters; it is perhaps the most discouraging he has written to me, and I have not gained an inch of ground with him. Upon reflection, I shall not yet send you his letter, because I know not what answer to make to it. If I listened to the suggestions of my heart, I should plumply tell him what I think. I should say——

"'Either my faults are deserving of civil death, or they have required only a long and painful correction.

I know the extent of the wrongs I have committed, and I bless, with tears in my eyes, the hand that has chastised me. But many actions similar to those I have committed, and even more heinous, have not, legally speaking, led to the terrible sentence of civil death. I have undergone the penalty which my conduct deserved, by enduring a long captivity, that has brought me to a sense of my errors. If, at an early period of my life, the fire of youth, burning thoughts, bad advice, and particularly unfortunate circumstances, gained the victory over the true nature of my heart, and made me belie protestations which were really sincere,—to consider me at present as about to pursue the same line of conduct, is reversing, for me alone, the order of nature: for a man at thirty years of age is not the same that he was at twenty, especially when he is born with an imagination so sulphurous, senses so inflammable, and a mind so active and reasoning, as those of your nephew. I admit that all I have suffered, and still suffer, is a well merited chastisement; and it is by this confession that I judge of the change that has taken place within me, and of the reliance that may be placed upon my good resolutions. If I were really not a new man, the loss of liberty, far from softening my disposition would have irritated it to such a degree that I should consider myself entitled to demand as a right that which I now supplicate as a favour; but years, which bring reason, have shown me my fetters as so

many rays, which, by enabling me to see my past delirium, guide me towards the light I am to follow in future. When I exclaim that I am burning to atone for my faults,—shall I be condemned never to carry my wish into execution?—or shall I be accused of bad faith? What right has any one so to accuse me?—what rash prophet can read in my heart that a desire so just, so natural, and probable as the one I express, is false?'"

"Speak candidly, my kind sister; do you approve of my language?—no doubt you do; but if I wrote so, it would be imputed to my 'infernal pride.' In my candour, the true imprint of the truths I utter, and the excellent resolutions I form, nothing would be seen but my 'reprobate sense.' Yet, I tell you candidly, all the rest is mere rhetorical flummery. I do not allude to the expression of my repentance, especially to my father; and I am a very great bungler if I cannot impart an expression of truth to what is really true. But I am speaking of the sentences I must write, and vary *ad infinitum* in order to say always the same thing. I have no doubt that were I to read over again my letters from Provence, I should find them infinitely ridiculous. If they have been shown to my father, he, who has the eye of an eagle, is very likely to have perceived this.

"But why do people cry out that they are not serving me, whilst they are serving me?—why try to destroy here my poor intellect, my poor sight, and

my greatly diminished strength? They are killing me; they are pushing me back into the gulf, the banks of which I am climbing up to save myself from drowning: for your reflection is perfectly just, and to day is not the first time that it has occurred to me. The cruel measures to which my mother is driven will completely overturn my new-born hopes. Her published statements will succeed in ulcerating the mind of my father-in-law, and in cooling the zeal of Madame de Mirabeau, a kind and noble-hearted woman, but who is never more than lukewarm, even in her affections. I am threatened with worse Monsters who infest the streets of Paris, whilst many an honest man pines away at Bicêtre and the galleys, loudly boast that they will publish my letters to the hapless victim of my love*. This is dreadful; and if I survived it, I should have no other object than revenge, which I would obtain if it cost me my life. Dear sister, I am broken-hearted, and I ought not to write to you at this moment; but I must pour my grief into your bosom, and you will not show my letter if there is any danger in doing so. Is it not horrible to see a single blow destroy my hope of recovering my freedom, returning to my father's house

* This is an allusion to a threat held out by Brianson, that he would publish the letters, deposited in his hands, which Mirabeau had written to Sophie before their elopement.

and bosom, helping him to drive away domestic sorrow, and finally raising up a little the woman I have pulled down, and whom this *éclat* will destroy? .... I should feel less miserable if I had preserved the right of interesting my father's generosity in saving her who never was my accomplice, but was ever my victim. If the threat of publishing my letters is carried into execution, what I have stated must happen; and this is the return made to me for having three times exposed my life for that wretch *, who left me, when ill of fever, single-handed against twelve boatmen of the Rhone, whom the coward had insulted, and then ran away from. On this occasion, I was fortunate enough to get out of the scrape without shedding a single drop of blood, whilst the vile coward, who has planned several assassinations in the course of his life, fired two pistols at a man whom Providence, in its mercy, allowed him to miss. — Such is my reward, I repeat, for having given myself, from pure generosity to him and another, an appearance of having committed grievous wrongs. They will no doubt ruin themselves—but will this cure, or console me?

"I cannot think, without the most gloomy and bitter anguish, that if I were free, this publication could not take place. For, besides the consequences which these dastardly and insolent wretches would

* Brianson.

incur, if any body could temper the mind of my poor mother I am that person. I say *if*, because I have my doubts, and could answer for nothing but the zeal, activity, and perseverance which I should employ, and the evidence I could adduce to her that the counsels she has followed have ruined her, and that through me alone she can expect to come to any arrangement. Would to God I could effect one at the sacrifice of my life!—with what joy would I lay my head on the block!

"Thus then, my dear sister, as my having lived is a reason for living—which is a consolation to me, because this calculation promises that I shall long preserve my father—in like manner my having perished is a reason for perishing. If my affairs had turned to good with a little rapidity, I might have hoped to make head against the enemies of my house. But nothing is decided, and they will succeed in destroying me, in spite of my father himself. This they well know, although my mother, notwithstanding my repeated entreaties, has the mania of bringing forward my name, using it upon all occasions, and thinking she can save me, whilst I would kick away that fatal plank, if it were laid down for me to cross upon.

"But what better contradiction can I give to all that comes from that quarter, than the letters I write to Madame de Mirabeau? Why does she not take a step so public, that I must be proved the most ungrateful of men if I ever hereafter give her reason to complain?

She has so many advantages over me, that I venture to say her family are much to blame if they let her lose them. I do not allude to the *inheriting* part of her family. Her father will not come round of his own accord:—I speak without ambiguity. The Marquis of Marignane is a man of noble feelings, very honourable, and very generous; but his mind is extremely weak, much more so than you have any notion of; and the means which are brought to bear upon his mind against me, will always be successful so long as his daughter, who might make him do as she pleased, does not oppose a vigorous reaction to these means. She must therefore be brought to act. But is she sincere? I cannot say. Still she ought to know me sufficiently to be sure of me, if she becomes the agent of my liberation. These are not mere words,—it is an exposure of my naked heart. If this language displeases, it must at all events, inspire confidence.

"I have thus given a summary of my reflections or rather of my feelings. Make what use of it you think proper, and support me, for I much require it.... I give myself up to your care, and advice; but I feel in my heart that if I do not soon leave this place, I shall never leave it alive. I am corroded by a black bile very foreign to my natural constitution. It is as well to observe that if I quit this tenure blind, as it is probable I shall—although what I say on that subject is termed nonsense in Provence—I must be taken

to Paris by way of Charenton or the Pont Royal, in order that I may be cast forthwith into the river; for I should otherwise prove a burthen to myself and others, and I have done too much harm to end thus without despair. Imagine, my dear sister, that with all the resources which this locality as well as the kindness of the King's commissioner can afford, for me to take exercise, I work ten or twelve hours a day when I am very good, that is to say, when I take the most recreation I possibly can. Being deprived of all society, even the most rustic, I am obliged to walk about with no other companionship than my own beautiful thoughts, which are not always the most agreeable in the world, as you may well suppose, and which, when they are only literary, send me back to my books or my papers. But this is nothing: the summer which enabled me to perspire and walk in a garden thirty or thirty-five paces long, but nevertheless in a garden, is bearable; but in winter, when the garden is covered with snow, pity alone, not to speak of necessity, would prevent me from keeping a poor sentinel in the garden exposed to the frozen blast, and I must remain encaged in a cell ten feet square. What could I do in such a miserable dwelling to pass away the time, if I did not study*?"

The reply to this desponding letter is so remarkable

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 10th 1780.

that we cannot refrain from transcribing a considerable portion of it, though, for the sake of brevity, we seldom insert Madame du Saillant's letters.

"I perceive that, being tired of resistance, you throw yourself, agitated and overcome, upon the bosom of affection. You have well earned, and may therefore depend upon this affection. But it cannot perform miracles, and must therefore aim only at affording you solid and lasting consolation. Thus, never impute, I beseech you, to want of regard, or to a wish to take advantage of your situation, any of the things I shall be obliged to tell you. The language of reason is quite different from that of passion: the latter leads to either good or evil; there is no medium—it must be to one or the other. Having escaped one of these extremes, you want to reach the other. I trust you will succeed, and I will be your security. But the true heroism intended for you is, that you should be moderate and patient; and why should you not? You are able to do everything, dear brother.

"Be not surprised at the resistance you experience on the part of our kind and worthy uncle. If you find great difficulty in persuading him of your repentance, he found no less difficulty in persuading himself of your errors. I even remember that he said to a minister who informed him that you had joined in intrigues against your father,—'I do not believe it.

I will answer for my nephew's honour, although I know him to be wild and thoughtless!

"My father has forgiven you; but my uncle, who knows better than any body what my father deserves, is not bound by this act. Esteem his scolding you rather as a favour; for people do not scold those whom they have given up. Do not attempt to justify yourself on any point, because it recals to mind particular grievances which become exaggerated by this species of contradiction. Here that pride is detected which is imputed to you. Excuse me if I speak thus openly; but you request me to tell you all that I observe, and I should be wanting to your affection and to the confidence you place in me were I to speak otherwise. Do not, I conjure you, give way to the agitation of your feelings with regard to the vexatious intelligence you have received, but let the wicked do that which you cannot prevent. Avoid, especially, committing yourself with them henceforward in any way whatever. Let them act and pursue their own course; the only real evil will be to themselves.

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"It would, no doubt, be atrocious, were the aberrations to which you have yielded too much, to be revived by such a publication; but raise your mind above the humiliation of undergoing this species of *amende honorable*. However improper these letters

may be, they will not show you more guilty than you have already appeared. You know and feel this for your humiliation; your writings and your conduct have made the world pass the same judgment upon you. But you must still feel and be sensible of it, in order to keep up your courage; and the calmness of the present man must be superior to the humiliations deserved by the past man. A proper sense of all this, and your future conduct, can alone wipe away so many foul stains. Persist in what you now acknowledge to be the only feelings calculated to atone for the wrongs you have committed; this alone may some day induce people to advocate your cause. By bestowing your confidence upon villains, you prepare tortures for yourself, whilst there is no danger in even offending honest men. A conviction of this, dear brother, will prevent you from opening your heart to perfidious counsellors. Would to God our unhappy mother would close her ears against their words! I cannot but deeply lament the difficulties now forming on her side, against the accomplishment of our wishes regarding yourself.

* * * * *

"As none could have involved you without your own concurrence, so also none can save you without it. They who are holding out a helping hand to you, will never withdraw it unless resisted by yourself. Take patience, give up actions, and speak only through your

feelings. Listen to the counsels of prudence. Persuade yourself of the immense difficulties to be overcome, and be well assured that we are stirring in your behalf. Consider that it is not in contemplation merely to alter your present situation, like the denouëment of a play, in which, when the curtain falls, no one inquires further about the characters represented. The object in view is to restore you to society upon the best possible terms for the present and the future. If you were only to be restored to the open air, like those wretches who receive a little temporary chastisement, are then left to themselves to embrace good or evil, and are forgotten or sent on to their ruin, your business would be more easily disposed of. But I suspect you expect a different kind of treatment, one more worthy of your name, of the sentiments you have imbibed, and of the advantages belonging to your destiny. Enjoy then the hope to which your good feelings may lead. and take patience as you think of the depth of the gulf from which you wish to be withdrawn *."

On a sudden Mirabeau's discouragement ceased, and he gave way to hopes which were not better founded.

" I have received from Provence a packet too important and too urgent to allow me time for a proper

* Unpublished letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated September 15th, 1780.

reply to your excellent letter. I shall write to you on Thursday, and answer only its chief points .... Alas! when, besides your rights as my benefactress and my sister, you are the organ through which, whatever information my father lets fall for my use, is conveyed to me, can you doubt that you are the object of my habitual thoughts?

"But as the name of Provence has surely roused your attention, know that I have received from Raspaud* a letter of thirteen pages, giving me a most sensible and affecting account of his journey to Marignane. I will send you this letter on Thursday; meantime, I must answer it, and my reply will be good, because the letter has given me a great deal of emotion. The kind-hearted Raspaud flew to Mirabeau to concert measures with the excellent Bailli, who, as you are aware, since he repeats it so often, neither does nor will interfere in any way, though he does every possible and impossible thing, and on the margin of his nullity you must write *black*, meaning to say, *white*. He himself instructed Raspaud as to what he was to do, and Raspaud has followed his instructions. Everything, therefore, promises the most complete success †."

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* The Marquis of Marignane's Notary, at Aix.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 18th 1780.

Notwithstanding these hopes, Mirabeau's cause was far from being gained with his wife and his father-in-law. Of this we are informed by the Bailli.

"The Countess has written to me to say that she dares not broach the subject to her father, who is greatly exasperated, and will not be easily brought round, because he has people about him who are interested in preventing a reconciliation. What I can assure you of is, that Marignane is fond of quiet, and the noisy habits of his son-in-law have alarmed him, even if this be the Count's only offence. It will be difficult, therefore, to persuade him, and his daughter will do nothing without his concurrence, if she would not expose herself to every annoyance *."

We add another letter from Madame du Saillant, and it is the last we shall notice. It is entitled to a place here, because in it she gives her brother an opportunity of refuting one of the most grievous imputations that ever attached to his name.

"Were I acted upon only by a sense of your present situation, I should be constantly writing to you, because it would, in some degree, be sharing your solitude. Nevertheless, I must not do so, because it is impossible I can always speak in furtherance of your impatience, and I should not like to make you more uncomfortable

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 26th 1780.

than you are. I was well satisfied with your letter, and it was only in reading it aloud, afterwards, that I perceived I ought not to have shown it to my father. I had advised you to attempt to justify nothing, but I did not notice that you were concealing a great deal. He interrupted me saying, 'What call you a moment of madness?—a moment that has lasted these ten years!—I have the dates and periods;' and in a moment he drew an energetic picture of that lapse of time, mentioning even statements written against himself. All this he specified with the power of language you know he possesses. Finally, he added;—'To forgive is one thing; I have done so, and before God I would save him, if possible, at my own personal cost: this I not only think, but feel. To forget is another thing: it exceeds our power and our duty*.'

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* Madame du Saillant's statement here is by no means exaggerated, for the Marquis expresses himself as follows in a letter written two or three days subsequently :—

"The other day, in a letter, he was adducing as a justification of a certain summary, a fit of rage caused by the most atrocious and perfidious suggestions. I took up the word, for the fit has lasted ten years, beginning from the period of his departure. I made a prosopopœia, saying, that to pardon was my delight and my duty; that to aid and serve even those who would kill me was in my character; but that to forget, was neither in our power nor part of our duty. His sister has since earnestly advised him to refrain in future from similar recapitulations, and to take condemnation and silence for the past."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 30th* 1780.

" I was told to go on; and upon his stopping me for a definition of good conduct, and asking me if it was any other thing than getting up in the morning with an intention of doing no evil, and going to bed at night without having done evil, I took the liberty to reply:

" ' It is, I think, feeling that one has squandered the time, the reputation, and the fortune of oneself and of others, and doing quite the reverse.'

" He squeezed my hand, listened to the remainder of your letter, then quietly said: —

" ' This is the first—entirely the first time, that I have perceived any talent in him. It is a proof that his pride is much broken down: for presumption prevents us from interrogating our own ideas, and calls up nothing but the recollection of them.'

" These expressions of his must have struck me, as I give them to you so minutely, and, as it turned out, I was delighted and consoled at not being mistaken, in point of fact, as to the effect the letter would produce. However, do not let us again expose ourselves to similar recapitulations. You know our excellent father's mildness and generosity at bottom; but we cannot say that he is flexible, especially when he considers himself right.

" As for our uncle, he loves us all, I believe; but he is devoted, body and soul, to his brother, and to him alone. I think him a little moved in your favour, as he lectures you, for he previously intrenched himself behind the pretence that an uncle was nothing, and he

called you *Monsieur le Comte,* in honour to the eldest born of his house, but who was an absolute stranger to him. You must therefore win him through my father, for it is useless to play for love stakes at such a distance*."

The following is Mirabeau's reply.

" A single word in your letter makes me take up the pen. All the remainder had deprived me of strength to write, so powerfully was I affected. It bore upon my mind too strongly to leave me the freedom of guiding my pen, and too much upon my nerves, which have so long been in a state of excitement, to allow even the possibility of writing. It is true, that your letter, so deeply affecting and evincing a rectitude of reasoning not less rare, inclosed one of eight pages from Dupont, containing information which I cannot cease from reading over and over again. What a man is this father whom I had so long misunderstood!

" You are quite right: I ought to seek excuses for nothing. But there is a circumstance which it is my duty to disavow with all the horror it inspires; and I would never bear the light, nor the looks of men, if I thought that a single honest heart could suppose me capable of such a thing. And yet some persons have had the base cruelty to say that it occurred; villains

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* Unpublished letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated September 23rd 1780.

have invented and taxed me with it. Do you think that I could ever have threatened my father's life? Great God!—if you thought so, how can you all be mad enough to attempt obtaining my freedom? It is an offence to justice and to nature. You do not, you cannot believe this atrocity; and if my father can have believed it, he must be the best, but the most unfortunate of men.

* * * * *

"Let us bury in eternal oblivion so many misfortunes, as well as the wrongs which my father has forgiven. My heart is, and will be, but too much lacerated by them. But tell my father—and say it to him in an affecting, but firm tone—that I devote myself to his hatred, to his exheredation, to his curse, and to everlasting torture, if mortal man can cite a sentence, a line, nay, a single word of mine, to justify the abominable calumny which I have this day heard of for the first time *.

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* The same day, Mirabeau wrote to Boucher, as follows:—

"The packet of this day has singularly affected me. Certainly, you had only to question me—you whose knowledge, and goodness, and prudence, I esteem and revere. It is my duty to explain the matter, and I do so. I have learned this day that atrocious calumny; it freezes my blood with horror. How could I have let you know this? Neither in the pamphlet you know of, nor in any periodical whatever, did I ever write a single word concerning my father; and I would stab myself this very instant if the thought of becoming a parricide ever entered my head; I would stab myself, I say, to get rid of so horrible a recollection."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 27th* 1780.

You may add, that, in stating what induced me to write this detestable libel*, I never intended to justify, nor even to excuse myself; that I know and feel how little verisimilitude there was in what I said. How well ought I to have remembered that nothing was so far from my father's character as speaking ill of his own family†. But I was like a drunken man. I say this, because it is true, and I deeply lament it.

"I cannot reply to your letter, except in a summary, because, very really, I am not myself. Dupont's letter of the 24th, and yours of the 23rd, press upon, enclose, and burn my heart‡."

We continue to extract from Mirabeau's letters.

"Place at my father's feet my respectful thanks for the word he has sent me through you. He exceeds my hopes, when he thinks of saving me. He grants me much more than I can ever hope to deserve from him, when he permits me to be guided, and gives counsel to my counsellors.

"You make me uneasy about your health; take care of this most valuable of all gifts after virtue and freedom. At a time when my mind was but little

* This is an allusion to the statement partly written by Mirabeau when in Holland, and signed by the advocate, Groubert de Groubental.

† In allusion to a saying falsely attributed to the Marquis, concerning Mirabeau and his mother.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 27th 1780.

enlightened, I madly trifled with mine. The first years of my life, like prodigal ancestors, have disinherited my last: and if I do not include this among my causes of remorse, I place it in the first rank of my causes for repentance. To do every thing, and more especially to do good, health is the first instrument; for it is very difficult to preserve a healthy soul in a cacochymic body.

" With my boiling feelings, and my not less burning style, it is impossible to write natural letters to a person I love, but whom I fear and respect, and who seems dissatisfied with every thing. I trust that you perceive by my letters to you, which are evidently written in the overflowing of my heart, that I love these outpourings, and that my pen does not run as glibly even as I could wish. Whenever I appear to you less natural, you may depend upon it that I am not at my ease. My disposition has been too much compressed, and is always in extremes; but it is not yet mature enough; and this is the key to most of my blunders and actual defects. In my letter to Dupont, I have explained this sentence fully; it is the result of profound meditation upon myself. If you do not understand me, apply to him; for I am not to-day in a much better condition to write than you are to read my letters. I have still the fever, which has never left me since my last.

" I am completely resigned. This is easy now that I have read in my father's heart, for his intentions

soften the saddest reality. My body is not so supple: let it take its chance. I do not conceal from you, however, that it seems hard to me that any one who is not my father*, who has in no respect the same rights, and towards whom I am a million of times less guilty, should impose so severe a law upon me, whilst my Supreme Judge shows me nothing but lenity. Dupont, from humanity, committed an error: this was making me see my situation in too favourable a light. This gives him a further claim to my gratitude; for he did it because I was in pain; and, after all, these false flashes of hope have not done me so much harm, for I know my star well enough to depend upon nothing. Hold! I must at all events accept your affection, upon which I firmly rely, and which I return with all gratitude and devotedness†."

Notwithstanding Mirabeau's assertion, he was not "completely resigned." A few days previously, in a fit of discouragement and bitterness, he had written in terms that alarmed the prudent Boucher.

"Your letters," wrote the latter to Mirabeau, "shall certainly not be sent. You wrote them without due reflection; and I must tell you candidly, that you should

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* The Marquis of Marignane.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 3rd 1780.

never reply, until the next day, to any communications you receive*."

Some hours after, Boucher again wrote to Mirabeau.

"Ah! my friend," said he, "what have you done? —and what should I have done, if my prudence had deserted me? You are to have an almost entire freedom, Pompignan for your place of trial, plenty of air, and an extensive library. But not a word yet: you must appear to know nothing about it†."

This project, which was not carried into execution, as we shall presently show, was also mentioned in a letter from the Marquis.

"I had an idea of sending him to Pompignan, an excellent place of retirement, with good air, a beautiful country, and an excellent library. The person who was to have been his host ‡ is a man of honour, talent,

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* Unpublished letter from Boucher to Mirabeau, dated September 26th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 28th 1780. In the letters from Vincennes, vol. iv., pages 42, 278, 279, 282, and 289, the project is mentioned of sending Mirabeau to reside some time at the castle of Pompignan.

‡ Lefranc, of Pompignan, author of "Dido," and "Sacred Poems," possessed an estate in the South. Thither it was intended to send Mirabeau. The following is what the latter says of the place:—

"Pompignan is in Languedoc, and situated near Montauban. This splendid property belongs to the author of "Dido," a man of high talent, (although so much attacked and jeered at by Voltaire,)

mind, and science. But the poor fellow has had an attack of apoplexy; and although he retains his perfect senses, and has written to me that he is in want of somebody to talk to, I know not what may occur from one moment to another to this old and worthy friend. Thus our ramparts crumble to dust, and our witnesses disappear *."

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and a friend of my father's of forty years' standing. He has the most complete private library in Europe, without excepting those of M. de Paulmy and M. de La Vallière.—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 27th* 1780.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 30th 1780. In one written two days after, we find this remarkable passage :—

" Lefranc, the second of my friends in seniority, and assuredly one of my best, informs me that he has just had a fresh attack of apoplexy, which affects his speech. He says in allusion to it: ' For my own part, this accident scarcely gives me any uneasiness; I foresee the result, and am preparing for the worst.' What a difference between the last struggle of this man, and the end of that devil's imp (Voltaire) who persecuted him, and who came hither to die a theatrical death, howling against God and his Saints, and giving us a rehearsal of the pretended scene, ' Thou hast conquered, Galilean !' All this difference proceeds from the one having spent his life in doing good, the other in getting himself praised."

It is, perhaps, needless for us to state that the above passage contains an allusion to Julian the Apostate.

Lefranc, of Perpignan, however, survived this attack four years. He died November 1st 1784, aged 75 years; and this event, at which the Marquis was much affected, suggested to him the following reflections, with which we conclude this note :—

" I received the news from the son of the deceased, and his worthy brother the Archbishop of Vienne, who was with him when he died.

Mirabeau received with transport this intimation of an approaching change for the better; and his thoughts were immediately directed to Sophie.

"I hope," he wrote, "that with this good news your sensible and generous heart will not forget the gentle and tender Sophie, who, always a victim and rejoicing at her own sacrifices, has a right, as sacred to your friendship as to my love, to be the first informed of any

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It was I who communicated the intelligence to the public prints. Lefranc was a friend of forty-seven years' standing, and his mind was one of the most vast and the best stored in knowledge that existed in Europe. He was firm in principle, and was gifted with a lofty soul, a noble genius, and rare talents. Simple as a child, easy to be deceived like most great men, he was an excellent citizen, a religious man, and an example of virtue. The time is come when some justice will be done to him. That which he has effected on his own estate by economy and perseverance, in splendid establishments of every description, would surprise even a sovereign. He considered me his first friend, and I shall always be proud of the title."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November* 14*th* 1784.

"In imitation of the great baboon (Voltaire) all the apes of Parnassus have made it their duty to sputter at and try to bite him. Nevertheless, the Old Man of the Mountain, at the singular assizes he is now holding at Paris during his last days, and before he yields up his filthy soul, having heard certain mongrel curs, who were trying to pay their court to him, barking their spleen against Pompignan, said to them:—'We may have quarrelled, but that does not prevent him from being the first writer of the day, both in verse and in prose.'"—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, Librarian of La Breva at Milan, dated December* 12*th* 1784.

thing fortunate that occurs to me. Send me, then, my excellent friend, a letter from her; and be assured, that your prudence has so great an ascendency over me, who have honour and intellect, but not sufficient maturity yet, only because it is accompanied with mildness and sensibility *."

A few days later, Mirabeau again wrote :—

" I send you, my good friend, my reply to the tender Sophie. Forward it to her as soon as possible, since your friendship is resigned to all the importunities of mine. It is but just that this dear creature should be informed of the progress made in my affairs. Her health and courage, undermined by such lengthened uncertainty, must be supported. How does her gentle heart yield to every circumstance that interests the object of her love! how strongly does the want of loving which belongs to her nature, render her submissive in all her desires, her opinions, and her thoughts.

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" And they say I must avoid other women! Oh! my friend, think you that a man can be twice beloved like this?—that a feeling heart can exchange such happiness for the triumphs of vanity † ? "

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 28th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 28th 1780.

We have shown, in a former part of this work, that one of the chief objects to be attained by Mirabeau's detention in the castle of Joux, was to prevent him from supporting the judicial resistance of his ill-used mother. The Marquis, from not knowing and being unwilling to know his son's real disposition, was fearful that this support would be given. We are about to show that, at present, under very different circumstances, the Marquis was willing to loosen the prisoner's fetters, but not to break them.

" I am determined to demand only the freedom of the castle, on condition 1st, that he changes his name: 2ndly, that he sleeps every night at the donjon, the key of which can be easily taken away, if he should become too lively *."

The Marquis yielded, perhaps, because the government was tired of ministering to his hatred towards his son. That the ministers had resolved to do nothing further, is evident from the retort made by M. de Maurepas. Perhaps, also, the Marquis wished now to make an agent of the son whom he had formerly feared as an opponent. Let us, however, without recurring to documents already published, listen to what Mirabeau says on the subject.

" Read my letter to the end without comment, then meditate, then consult, then reply.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 10th 1780.

" First, there are two axioms which, in my opinion, ought to serve as the basis of every plan of negociation with my mother.

" 1st. Nothing will be obtained from her except by getting her to sign suddenly, and by a sort of surprise acting upon her mind and heart.

" But, 2ndly. This storm cannot be commenced without opening the trenches in due form, and carrying forward numerous parallels until the body of the place is reached. (Excuse this jargon, for I have no time to attend to style, and it is of no consequence.) Here are two things which must appear to you contrary to each other; but I tell you that they are true and connexive. To prove this, let us argue hypothetically.

" I suppose there are two modes of *personal* negociation with my mother—this is the first:—

" Dupont or Boucher (rather the latter) takes me from the donjon of Vincennes, and conveys me, well boxed up and still a prisoner, to the parlour of St. Michael *. There I attempt to move her feelings, and say: ' You are right—Oh! truly you are right. But I am dying; and then a lawsuit may be gained or lost. If you gain it, do you not perceive that the judges who decide cannot, in like manner, get me released from the

* A conventual establishment for the confinement of females, in which the Marchioness of Mirabeau was detained by a *lettre de cachet.*

donjon of Vincennes? Now, no one will ever be able to drive it out of my father's head that I have intrigued, planned, and concerted in your behalf, and his resentment will, therefore, be eternal. I shall, consequently, be kept a prisoner till his death (should it precede mine); for you know that the ministers are on his side. If, by your interest, which is not at all probable, you should succeed in obtaining my release, behold me ruined, driven for ever from my paternal home, expelled from the Marignane family, at your charge, and devoured with grief. If you lose your lawsuit, you will die broken-hearted, and the gulf I am in will only become deeper. Now, instead of all this, my happiness and peace of mind are in your hands, &c., &c.'

"Do you know what answer I shall get? The same already given to me in Holland on a nearly similar occasion. 1st. 'I cannot lose my lawsuit.' 2ndly. 'I cannot lose my lawsuit.' 3rdly. 'I cannot lose my lawsuit,' and so forth *ad infinitum*. 'Having gained it, I run to you; you are already in Olympus;'.... for it is thus matters are looked at. I shall, perhaps, move her; make her shed a few tears;—but let me state every thing on the bright side: suppose I shake her opinion, persuade her to do what I ask, and return to sleep in my prison..... Next day, a grand letter is dictated by Mazurier or by Larrieu *, and my work is

* Agents who entirely governed the Marchioness of Mirabeau.

destroyed. This is not all: it will be published that I have seen, and proposed, and that my father is making use of me; it will be inferred that he is afraid, and other similar follies asserted; and my father, already indisposed, will have another cause of grief.

"I now state the second personal mode of negociating.

"Suppose a portion of freedom has been restored to me, on account of my ill-health, and I obtain from *the minister* (for, besides that the master of Bignon is not to appear in the business, high-sounding words are necessary) permission to remain a fortnight or three weeks at Paris to have my body examined by the surgeons, my eyes by the oculists, &c., on the express condition that I shall be seen by no one except the individuals named by my father; that I shall go no where; that, in a word, I shall remain in prison either at M. Boucher's, or at Dupont's, or at any other person's; — but that I *may* go to St. Michel. It is evident that I should then act no longer like a stifled man attempting to breathe; I should not now be a slave, nor even a client. I set out with letting her say all she pleases, but I temporise; and I get myself supported by Larrieu, who has always considered me his dupe, and whose dupe I must still pretend to be: — but he is to be gained over. This Larrieu, moreover, has sense enough to desire to appear as playing a praiseworthy part, and the more so because he does

not stand high in the opinion of honest men. I now show very gently, but with proof in hand, that some have betrayed my mother, and others wish only to encourage the lawsuit, which for a million of reasons may be lost; that, for as many other reasons, there may be an inclination, at Bignon, to bring the matter to an issue in order to obtain repose of mind in old age. I feel my way, always saying, 'you are right!' I bide my time, and, above all, I do not let go my hold. I quit her not during an instant, I become her very shadow; I awe those about her, at the same time that I caress them. In fine, I lend myself to everything, and, perhaps, succeed.

"Such, in summary, are my notions, which I might support with a great number of details. But what interest do you suppose I have in all this? The greatest and only interest: the tranquillity of my father, and that of my poor mother. Then comes the happiness of dating from a good action. As to any expectations from my mother's fortune, I heed them not; for I have repeatedly desired my mother to leave her fortune to any one of her children she chose, provided I was not the one, and told her that if she could make her peace at such a price, I should be the happiest of men. I even feel this better than I could say it; and now that I have no children, if I were free to render available a donation she might at this very moment make, even to Madame de Cabris, provided

your rights were respected and my father enjoyed the usufruct necessary to his comfort, I would quickly open a vein, and sign the deed with my blood*."

All these efforts, however, did not hasten Mirabeau's release from prison. He continued to receive harsh letters from his uncle, his wife was lukewarm in his cause, and his father-in-law was his decided enemy. A shade of bitterness at length began to appear in the prisoner's letters.

"No doubt you are very prudent, and possess all the prudence of an elder child. Be this as much as you please, but get the health of a younger. Nevertheless, I cannot yield to all you say, and I will speak to you very naturally and very clearly, for I perceive that no one of my family understands my language. This is, perhaps, an advantage; I have not changed apparently, and nothing in me was good save the bottom of my heart which was obscured by so much scoria.

"1st. I know not why you say that you write on account of *my impatience*. Dupont will tell you that I have done a little of everything here, except becoming impatient. I have written facetious things, I have written on serious and profound subjects, I have also attempted compositions of a moving character; in short, I have laboured in every branch of literature. I have a trunk

* Unpublished letter to Madame du Saillant, dated October 8th 1780.

full of papers, exclusive of my correspondence, and of the nonsense I have thrown into the fire. In good faith, can a man in prison, who has become impatient, exercise such freedom of mind as this? My father spent a few days in this place, a circumstance that constitutes the climax of his fame. Now, in my judgment, it is an enjoyment to be imprisoned for a glorious cause. But I should like for him to ask himself, whether he could have written books here? It can be done, however; for I feel that this head of mine is capable of any thing in pursuit of the grand and the beautiful. But I have passed forty months here, scourged by repentance and remorse, suffering in body, heart, and mind; and some good people, after these, my forty months of captivity, are surprised at my vivacity, at my fire, and at what they term my *gaiety* (surely this is not the proper word). Meanwhile I work like a poor devil of a purser's clerk, with a wife and six children to maintain. Now, I think all this very far from *impatience.*

"2ndly. *Raise my courage.* Dupont knows me a little too well to flatter himself that he can raise my courage. He is more fearful of my excitement than of my despondency—and he is perfectly right. It is very true, that he, like myself, and, I believe, every man who is not a slave (now, I was not born a slave, nor will I ever be one), thinks that I ought to be dependent upon my father alone. We do not, however, appreciate less

fully my father's profound wisdom in making his measures subordinate to those of the Marignane family. But I do not the less repeat, that it is hard, when the offended sovereign forgives (I mean my father), that he who, after all, is only allied to me by marriage (for I really understand my vernacular tongue), should lay down the law with the most imperious harshness. And what law?—that of Brennus, *væ victis!* I have not, nor can I make up my mind to this, because respect for misfortune, and pity for the unfortunate, are in my heart.

" 3rdly. I am well aware that the situation of my whole life requires *length and patience;* but from this to a ten feet dungeon, there is a considerable distance. The following argument is difficult of refutation. My father condescends to wish to save me. Now, if I am to be saved, it must not be delayed till I am dead; but, I am dying; I am therefore justified in supplicating that I may have a larger prison, when I say that its greater dimensions will save my life. You may then take your own time, and be as long as you please in settling the matters that concern me. The Marquis of Marignane will then have no pretence for going to law, as I shall still remain a prisoner; but health will be restored to me. Under circumstances in which I have such affecting evidence of my father's intentions, I know but of one mode of reply to the above; it is to say what has been already said and repeated: 'All he

advances about his ill-state of health is a downright story.' But I dare ask, who has a right to speak in this strain? 'He tells stories.' I must then be very impudent to write these *stories*, as I do, under the eyes of the inspecting magistrate of this prison, who knows, day by day, every thing that passes in it. And is not a word of what I write true? Then the oculists and physicians who have examined me, and continue to see me, have lied! And those who see me daily do no better! And it was for my own pleasure, that during one of the severest winters we ever had, I was sometimes obliged to take so many as three baths in one day! You must admit that such assertions are absurd. Nevertheless, Dupont said to me,—'Yes! my friend, you are very ill and suffer a great deal, but they will not believe it. Do not therefore mention it, because you must not make them suspect you of telling an untruth. But is it incredible, that a complaint to which I have always been subject, should be aggravated by forty months of captivity and want of exercise?—that my sight, which has always been delicate, should give way under the weight of fifteen hours of labour *per diem*? Well, well! if it be incredible, it is nevertheless true, and this article of *sight*, is the only point upon which I am *impatient*. I would not give a farthing to save my life, if I imagined that I could no longer be useful and even necessary to two or three individuals. In my opinion, life is the most beautiful

of nature's inventions; but to live without sight is a prospect which (I confess my weakness) draws tears from my eyes, but cruel and bitter tears, which lacerate the heart instead of alleviating its pangs. This is, I repeat, the only thing that makes me *impatient.* If you term *impatience* the warmth of my style, which is somewhat Scythian, it is for want of knowing my manner. When I write naturally, I gallop on; when I am afraid, or in grief, I slowly compose academics, which are very stupid, aud very insipid, and persuade nobody. This is my present situation with my uncle.

4th. I wish to *scold no one.* Good heavens!—it truly becomes me to scold; I am too much in want of indulgence myself, not to be the most tolerant of men. But I say that my uncle inflicts great pain, infinite pain upon my heart. I no longer open his letters without shuddering, and I am ill for several days after reading one of them. It is good that man should be pounded, and Bacon is right in comparing him to aromatic herbs. But if he is too much pounded, all the perfume evaporates, and nothing remains.

"*You answer for it* is a mere form of expression. Nobody in the world, except one 'who probes men's loins and hearts,' can answer for any man. And I, who write to you, am very far indeed from answering for myself, whom, however, I well know. For, 1st, I may become mad from one moment to another. Newton, who was as far above me as the heaven is above the earth, wrote

a commentary upon the Apocalypse; and I have seen a man, mild as a lamb, during a sudden vertigo, and whilst he was in perfect health, kill another man whom he did not know. 2ndly, I have, in the course of my life, done too many things, *in spite of myself*, to be able to swear that I will do such things no more,—to swear to it upon *my honour;* but I promise upon that honour that I have a firm will ever to do good in future; and I know that my will is very firm, which is the reason why I do not despise myself thoroughly, —for this quality is very rare. Further, I think that henceforth I shall never be able to do any essential evil, unless under an attack of physical madness. If, then, the security of another person is demanded of me, it is saying—*die;* for no prudent man would become moral security for another, and the security of any but a prudent man would be refused. A wise man would say, 'I answer for it that such and such appears to me to be the case,' but he would say no more. 5thly, It is not in me to betray my thoughts, therefore I cannot agree with you in your paragraph upon the Marquis of Marignane. I think not only that it is not his duty to force his daughter into a lawsuit with me, but that he would fail in those duties sacred to honest men, were he to do so on his belief, or pretended belief, of false reports about me. It is precisely this which worries me. The first impression produced upon me by unjust accusations, is one of suffocation; I then

reason and say to myself—'But they are not sincere; they do not believe this,' and so forth. Then I become gloomy, grieved, ill-seeing and ill-judging...I tell you I love not those who so easily believe the tales of wicked people. I have been the maddest of men; but I never picked a quarrel with any one except that cowardly Villeneuve, who, as I was informed, had so basely insulted my sister. I have always been sparing of blood; I have displayed some personal courage, and yet they tax me with brutality towards a feeble woman!

"This, in my mind, is the truth; and it appears to me that you have not yet heard this truth:—so long as I remain in the donjon of Vincennes, the Marquis of Marignane will never relax. Nobody can counterbalance the influence of the collaterals; no one can stimulate Emily, who is extremely weak, but a good kind of woman, and loves me. She said to Madame de Vence, 'I would give my life's blood to have him here immediately and without discussion, but this struggle frightens me.' Such is her character, and thus it will be so long as she is not excited by me; but I cannot excite her for a million of reasons. Her father says to her, and he is not wrong—'What is proved by the agitations of a man who wishes to get out of prison?' *Some others* say to her, 'What is better than being a widow at six or seven and twenty, with a prospect of a fortune of 60,000 livres a year?'

And to reply to all this, she has nothing but her recollections of one who appears dead; for a man is virtually dead when in confinement here. Either I am grossly mistaken, or if I appeared upon the book of life, the bets would be on my side; but so long as I am unable to pursue a meritorious line of conduct, so long shall I be a lost man. This you yourself feel and admit, when you say that I cannot do *penance* here. True, my being here is not a penance, it is a torture such as neither Busiris nor Nero ever inflicted.

" But let them place me in a situation to do penance, and then let me judged without appeal*.

" My uncle is like you, and you are like my uncle; but he must say a great deal more to me before I give up the hope of his assistance. Has he not assisted, during the last twelve months, in guiding, enlightening and correcting me? Does he think that, by the weight of his authority, he shall escape from my gratitude? No, and it shall always be with a full measure of hope that I shall kneel at his feet when I require from him an essential service—a service which he will first refuse, and then render me.

" Let us return to the task I persevere in attempting. Do you know why I think of the interests of others rather than of my own? It is because, since my sight has become so bad, and I am therefore obliged to look nearer upon myself for want of sending my glances

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 14th 1780.

further off, I have discovered that I am not a very amiable gentleman. And then, do you see, I am at last convinced that the only true mode of enjoyment, is that of making others enjoy. Now, in this business relating to my mother, my father affects an indifference, which is certainly not real, or I am greatly mistaken. His paternal dignity covers, with this mask, his firmness, which struggles with his grief without blunting it. I think then, that to make his old age happy, these brambles must be cut through; and I will do it or perish.

"You sounded my father with great ability, but he was far from understanding you; nor do I think it necessary he should understand you. It is quite natural that he should be discouraged. My advice would be to begin almost without his knowledge, in order that he may not grieve, should the thing fail. I am persuaded, that if we do not let him into the secret until matters are in full progress, that man of strong mind, who appears to have lost none of his energy and vigour, will jump at the idea of a negociation so useful to his house*."

The reader may judge of the Marquis's feelings on this subject, from the following passage in one of his letters.

"He (Mirabeau) is, or feigns to be infatuated with this pretended negociation which he thinks important

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 18th 1780.

to me, and would indeed be so if the thing were possible. They have put it into his head to make his mother change her opinion, give up all idea of a trial, fix her condition, and settle upon her children what I wished. He pretends he has the power of undeceiving her about *the file biter**. The police, with which he does as he pleases, will serve him, he says, in getting away the persons who are giving his mother bad advice. In short, a masterpiece of intrigue is in agitation, and that is his forte. But I plainly declare, and cause to be declared this very day, that I will not agree to it; nor give myself the ridicule of buying over a mad woman through the agency of a madman. I know the worth of peace and trêasure with such people, whose brains are in the moon, whilst their bodies remain here below to gesticulate as the wind directs. I will authorise it only when the mother consents to fix her own condition and that of her children, by an irrevocable deed of settlement. But I will hear of no arrangement of matters†."

We complete our extracts by transcriptions from the letters in which Mirabeau makes known the variable state of his impressions, and the slow progress of the preparations for his deliverance.

"I understand you well, but you do not com-

* A nickname given by the Marquis and the Bailli to Madame de Cabris.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 28th 1780.

prehend me, because I am in this place, where I must write, as St. John wrote his book of Revelations in the Island of Patmos. You deceive yourself: there will be no murmurs against my half-freedom. People of sense find my frightful detention very long, and of this I have more proof than one. Now, what have I asked for?—and what do I still ask for?—*A more capacious prison.* You appeared to incline in favour of this request: why should you now change? It makes an enormous difference to me, whether I am a prisoner in the *castle* of Vincennes, for instance, or in the *donjon;* but it makes none to the public, because they say, 'It is intended to give him a trial, and this is but fair. He is always in the King's hands, and is at the door of the donjon. If he misbehaves, it is easy to open this door, thrust him inside, and close it upon him. If he behaves well, and this man has interesting qualities enough for him to have a trial, why then they are right in what they are doing.' This would be the language of the public.

"Sum up all, and under every supposition, the rallying cry of all who take interest in me, is '*half-freedom, an indispensable preliminary.* For my own part, I repeat and swear to you, that I have only a single cause for impatience—that of my sight; although for the last ten days I have suffered more than ever elsewhere. But I have always looked with coolness at my other complaint, because, if it comes to the stone, it is

like a duel—in five minutes you are cured or dead; there is no blinking. But as regards my sight.... I weep, and you must not be surprised at it. Milton, who, in favour of liberty, was almost as great a fanatic as I am, has written that he would much rather be a slave than lose his sight. In his dramatic poem of Samson Agonistes, his hero is in the power of the Philistines, and his eyes are put out. Manoah asks him whether he most regrets his liberty or his sight. 'My sight,' Samson replies. Now, dear sister, judge if you can, how horrible the prospect of blindness is to me. The season is come that will complete my blindness, if I am left, the winter through, in a room ten feet square, betwixt smoke and ice *."

The negociation advanced, however, but the timid prudence of Dupont took the alarm. In a letter to M. Boucher, dated October 18th 1780, he thus expresses himself:—

"Let your wisdom and your kindness, Sir, be joined to my exhortations to impart to our poor friend a prudence that cannot be shaken. He is about to be placed in the *castle*, and I tremble lest he should commit himself there."

At the same time, Dupont undertook to reply to Sophie, who was making anxious inquiries about the

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 15th 1780.

progress of the negociation. We transcribe part of this reply, not only for the sake of giving variety to our extracts, but also to bring back Sophie for a moment to the reader's attention, from which she has now been some time excluded.

"Having remained a long time without writing to you, I was afraid you might be a little angry with me; but I did your noble disposition an injustice, and I humbly beg your pardon..... I shall not reply to the ridicule which you condescend to throw upon me. I blush a little at having spoken a singular language to my friend, in a letter which I did not suppose you would ever have seen *; but you must have perceived, at all events, that the writer had an honest heart, and was anxious to preserve your rights. The soul of a hero may be lodged in the body of a satyr, but this soul must command him, and for that reason it is a soul. Be assured, Madam, be assured, feeling and generous creature, that I have not all the fears which I exaggerate

* This is an allusion to a letter, written in very free terms, by Dupont, to Mirabeau, advising the latter to resist his mad propensity for women.—*Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 288.

The publisher of these letters had the impudence to leave entire a most disgusting sentence, the horrible obscenity of which was fully apparent, though veiled by a few initial letters. It appears that complaints were made when the book appeared, and the objectionable passage was omitted before all the copies of the edition were worked off. We possess a copy of this same edition, in which the passage is replaced by dots.

to my friend. Certainly I believe you are capable of defending against all kinds of seduction a heart attached to yourself, which has had the happiness of chaining your own, and the misfortune to bring so many evils upon you. But a general harangues his army, although he knows it to be brave, full of honour, affectionate, and faithful to the King and the state. I should be so sorry if the least accident were to happen to the Count, that I am never weary of preaching to him. I have given him advice, which he also has turned into ridicule, and which is more rigidly moral, although quite as singular, as that to which he referred you. I think we are coming to the denouëment of what concerns him. I have gained ground, and much ground, whatever the Count's impatience may induce him to think, since the conversation with his father, who announced to me his freedom. The Marquis appears to have determined, at least in his heart, 1st, that the uncle's consent shall no longer be considered necessary; 2ndly, that the consent of the father-in-law shall also be dispensed with; 3rdly, that the fresh solicitations which the wife dares not make, shall not be waited for.

* * * * * *

" We are well aware that your two causes cannot be separated. Yours is a joint prosecution. If it is abandoned, your freedom is the consequence, even perhaps before the Marquis of Monnier's death. Our object, therefore, is to restore you and the Count to your civil

rights, by some treaty or other, and the best that can be supported by law.

* * * * * *

"My zeal, my advice, and my activity, shall not be wanting in your service. By adding patience and method to our plan, we shall ultimately succeed, especially if you have the same patience..... Perhaps my prudence and circumspection may seem to you in contradiction with my temper, which often betrays itself. If so, you may be right; but, believe me, my soul is germane to yours and to that of our friend; but it is like an old cousin rendered very prudent by experience, and the ambition of being qualified, with little means, for great undertakings. If the Count is not free when you write to him, tell him to be calm, and to sleep upon my shoulder. Agitation does no good. I am doing all I can, and provided he has confidence and is docile, we shall very soon obtain the victory, which cannot escape us *."

Mirabeau continued to press his sister.

"I am too old to take a writing-master. Besides, I love my own scrawling, because it much resembles my father's hand-writing. Further, it may happen, much sooner than you are aware, that I may not be able to write at all. Therefore, take patieuce, and, above all, preserve your beautiful eyes.

* Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Madame de Monnier, dated October 27th 1780.

" Erase from your opinions, I beg of you, that there was any inconsistency in my demanding horse exercise when afflicted with a nephritic disorder; for this exercise, together with baths and diuretics, are the only remedies known for that complaint. The gravel and these nephritic pains are two distinct things, although the one may lead to the other. In short,—but I have no business thus to weary you,—I am no physician, but I am a physiologist. Besides, every medical man consulted in my case has prescribed horse exercise; in consequence of which, last winter, when the pain in my loins had become dreadful, by a very unusual favour, I was made to trot up and down a garden only thirty paces long. I have been better for it all the summer. When I perspire I am very well, with the exception of sight and sleep, which, like false friends, that is to say, like ninety-nine hundredth parts of the human race, flee from the unfortunate. When I am unable to perspire I am in a deplorable state. But this is the least of my cares, distinct from my sight; therefore I will not annoy you any further with this matter, as regards either the past, the present, or the future. People may form on the subject whatever opinions they please.

* * * * * *

" I will not, either, talk to you about that lamentable past, for my faults come not from myself alone, and yet I will accuse myself only.

" Madame de Mirabeau has not yet shown you, and probably never will show you, the letter I wrote to her from Pontarlier, before my escape, and even prior to my being intoxicated with the philtres of love. I know not what they understand by a 'threatening note.' This letter filled eight pages, and that is surely not a 'note.' If in my last day I must appear before the Sublime Reason which presides over nature, I shall say, 'I am covered with enormous stains; but I wrote that letter, and thou alone knowest, great God, whether I should now be as guilty as I am, had I received a proper reply!'

" My dear sister, I despair of my destiny;—do you know wherefore? Because I see that my truest accents find every heart closed against them. Well, well!—let me be resigned! But when I perceive that I persuaded every body when I was a bad man, and that I can move nobody now that I am penetrated with a desire to do good, I am tempted to say with Brutus—'Oh, virtue! art thou but a vain name?' You will think me ungrateful in using the expression, 'I can move nobody.' But I am not so; for you all assist me merely from pity. Very well! know my mind, then: I am further from being converted than you think, perhaps; for I am so proud, that the idea of owing any thing to pity tears my heart to shreds.

* * * * * *

" I think, my kind and noble-hearted sister, that if

to forgive readily is a defect, it is a sublime one. Now, my father, your husband, and yourself, have all forgiven me so easily for things so little worthy of pardon, that you ought not to preach such a principle.

* * * * * *

" I owe it in justice to Madame de Mirabeau to say thus much:—I know, beyond a doubt, that, at the bottom of her heart, she thinks me scarcely at all culpable towards her. This feeling, apparently exaggerated by her generosity, does her infinite honour, and the more so, because she has mentioned it to a woman whom she fears and respects. Nothing but this alone raised in me a desire to be reconciled to her, and I never really felt myself culpable towards her but at this moment. The truth is, however, that she resides in a place of perdition, if it be a second Tourves*—a place where the most lofty mind and the strongest tempered soul would lose much of their energy. Judge, then, what will happen to her who has neither a lofty mind nor a strongly tempered soul, but who, though very ill brought up, was born to be reasonable, and would probably have been so if I had not been very foolish, and of too high and unequal a flight for her. This is perhaps a mode of speaking that will offend you; if so, I am wrong; but, either I am mistaken, or you ought to perceive by it that I have reflected, and know (too

* An allusion to the mansion of the Count of Valbelle, then dead, which Mirabeau termed the " Palace of Sardanapalus."

late, it is true),—but that I *do* know those by whom you are surrounded.

" I am in despair about the business so truly important to my heart*. You must understand me. HERE I CAN DO NOTHING, nor even attempt the least thing; and if I leave this place blind or infirm, I can do nothing anywhere. Take care, my dear sister, that I do not say 'I *will* do nothing.' 'I will do all that is necessary whether possible or impossible,' is the saying of a weak man, or of one that is becoming so; but I shall always repeat 'HERE I CAN DO NOTHING.'

" My dear sister, you see your brother as he now is, not as he was. For a vast and lofty mind, he has too little connexion in his ideas, which is an immense defect; but he has an indomitable will, and this in some degree compensates for the defect. Consider how this will be sharpened now that I have to regain esteem, affection, respect, existence, and fortune. Oh my good and worthy supporters, do not let me waste my strength in building mud walls! My body is already much worn out. My heart is honest, noble, and tender—pray believe this: it is horribly compressed—pray dilate it a little. My head is still tumultuous and unformed (and where the devil could it have been formed? I have hitherto lived only to commit follies, or to remain in prison). Very well!—you shall guide my head; its tool, that is to say, its

* The attempt at a negociation between his father and mother.

intellect, is ingenuous and powerful; put a handle to it. Good God!—we are losing the most valuable time. Be sure, that by dint of zeal, honour, and exertion, you will make of me, and I shall make of myself, all that you wish. But present the magic buckler; make my fetters drop off. Certainly they are not flowers, but I will shake myself. You will then see me suddenly grown six feet taller. Your brother talks wildly; in future he will be below no situation whatever....! No, dear sister, no; *let us build no castles;* let us raise our scaffolding first. But where shall we place it?—we have no ground to rest it upon. I am dead; restore me to life!

"You will, perhaps, think this the letter of a madman; but lend me your eyes, and give me time, thirty or forty sheets of paper, and liberty to say all I think, and it shall no longer be the letter of a madman. I embrace you with extreme tenderness; I love and thank you from the bottom of my soul. And now that I have again crept into my shell, I am as measured, as resigned, and as patient as a snail *."

Whether Mirabeau had been carried away by his feelings, or had calculated his effects, we are unable to say; but he hit rather too hard in these last letters. This fully appears in the following extracts taken from his sister's replies.

"Good God!—your last letter contained an expression

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 25th 1780.

that might have ruined us for ever! You do not seem to recollect that he upon whom your fate depends has so high a notion of filial respect, which he still practises so earnestly even towards the memory of his parents, that I fear his sense of paternal dignity, and the duties it imposes, will prove the greatest obstacle to your being fully satisfied. I fear also that your thoughtless pleadings will spoil all with him and our uncle, who dislikes and mistrusts eloquence. But what I am sure of is this: had our father seen the following passage in your handwriting: 'People of sense find my frightful detention too long,' he would have told me very seriously that the care of remedying its length must be left to those people of sense, and would have forbidden me to speak to him any more on the subject. For heaven's sake, then, express only sorrow for the past *."

This was the point which Mirabeau had reached after more than forty months of the most rigorous captivity †. His sister's letter affected him the more, because he supposed it had been dictated, nor was his

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* Unpublished letter from Madame du Saillant to Mirabeau, dated October 19th 1780.

† Dupont was well aware of the feelings of the Marquis, or rather those of Madame de Pailly; for, a few days subsequently, he wrote as follows:—

"The people of Bignon would be well pleased with a pretence for being angry. Be very severe with regard to the letters he (Mirabeau) writes.—*Unpublished letter from Dupont to Boucher, dated October 30th* 1780.

conjecture wrong. We have the rough draught of this letter, in the hand-writing of Garçon, the Marquis's secretary. This new affliction, however, did not make Mirabeau lose sight of his own dignity.

"The little you say to me," he wrote to his sister, "has contracted my heart, which you are determined not to know. In truth, my dear sister, I will show you the very bottom of my soul, for it contains nothing but what is correct and praiseworthy; and, I repeat, that sensible people find my imprisonment too long, without thinking that the meaning of this expression can be equivocal, when it is written by the same hand that has traced the following:—

"'My father, sitting upon the judgment seat of his domestic tribunal, and condemning me to death for the offences I have committed against him, would appear to me just. But my father's keeping me here, is to me a frightful example of what ages of inertness, or bad laws, may take from the greatest men, either by relaxing their principles, or by not leaving them masters of the means.'

"This paragraph is, I trust, nobly felt, and one of profound thought. You read it to my father, and you did well; for to speak to him of strong minds is to speak of his own mental power. Did you see that he was offended at it? Well!—what more do I mean by saying that people of sense find my detention too long? People of sense say: 'That man is either incurable or

he is not: if he is, why is his name mentioned? Let him be sent to Sumatra or to Java, [this was thought of long before he committed his serious offences,] and let him be drowned during the voyage. If he is not incurable, has he not lost sufficient by losing the best years of his life?—by losing his health and sight? In good faith, is this, joined to so many other causes of suffering, and to the puncture of remorse, no punishment?'

"I confess that this language does not appear to me unreasonable; nor will I ever believe that my father thinks it so, and sees in it an abjuration of the remorse which will pursue me to the grave.

"With regard to this other expression, 'that it is the duty of every quiet and humane man to deprive of his freedom him who used it only to injure others,' I know and respect the force of mind and loftiness of soul of him who wrote it; and it is on that account that if I ever see that person again, I pledge myself to make him admit that such an action would place mankind under the abominable law of despotism, the most frightful of evils and the most atrocious of crimes. The principle itself is unjust, and its application proves nothing; for nobody disputes—and I, less than anybody—that when I committed injury, I deserved to lose my freedom;—but who dares to say,—'If he recovered his freedom he would again commit injury?'

"I never fancied anything easy: but if I argued a

hundred thousand years, you would not understand me. My legs are tied and I can only jump; untie them and I will walk...Dear sister, pray make my heart expand a little, by writing me a letter in a more confiding strain. You have pained me much, and I deserve it not. At all events, may the news of your complete recovery give me a joy which I defy you to mutilate*."

* * * * *

"My dear and kind sister, the surgeon whom I laugh at, and also Dupont and my other friend (Boucher), whom I must obey, have made me promise and swear that I will not write, whatever happens to me: 1st, on account of my sight; 2ndly, on account of my *incredible* ill health; 3rdly, (and this is perhaps the true reason) because my mind, being cruelly agitated, does not allow me to give sufficient clearness to my thoughts, which spring up as from the bottom of a Vesuvius. Notwithstanding all this, and at the risk of committing perjury, I must tell you: 1st, that I will say nothing to you concerning the two first pages of your letter, (no, upon my honour, unless I can write a folio volume in reply,) except to declare that for the last forty-one months, I have been thinking of the best means to console Madame de Ruffey; and that in this particular point, for the last forty-one months, I have

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 29th 1780.

behaved in a manner to satisfy every honest man. This you will admit some day. 2ndly, I tell you, that if you intend to quiz me with your 'lofty intellect' and 'strong mind,' I reply to you most simply, that I think I possess these two things, and would sell them for twopence, if any one would buy them of me; further, I would give one of my limbs into the bargain to any body who would take them off my hands in exchange for a cool head and a supple heart! Therefore laugh at me until you are tired. 3rdly, I tell you that I know of nothing more insipid than *common sense;* but I know of nothing more rare and valuable than *good sense.* Therefore be so good, if you wish me to understand you, not to confound the two, and the more so, as you yourself possess the latter. 4thly, You none of you know me at all, and, what is worse, you never will; because if you lived to the age of Methusaleh you would always see in me the youth of twenty. Thus is human nature constituted. 5thly, The warmth and tumult of my elocution prove nothing in favour of my thoughts; and the effervescence or the convulsions (if you are pleased so to call them) of a man in my situation prove nothing for or against his state in a natural situation, and in a calmer medium; thus your sentence—'if you forget yourself, even in prison, what will you do when you are in the world?' is wholly devoid of logic; which is not very surprising, for I believe you never were forty-one months in prison. But the

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 29th 1780.

behaved in a manner to satisfy every honest man. This you will admit some day. 2ndly, I tell you, that if you intend to quiz me with your 'lofty intellect' and 'strong mind,' I reply to you most simply, that I think I possess these two things, and would sell them for twopence, if any one would buy them of me; further, I would give one of my limbs into the bargain to any body who would take them off my hands in exchange for a cool head and a supple heart! Therefore laugh at me until you are tired. 3rdly, I tell you that I know of nothing more insipid than *common sense;* but I know of nothing more rare and valuable than *good sense.* Therefore be so good, if you wish me to understand you, not to confound the two, and the more so, as you yourself possess the latter. 4thly, You none of you know me at all, and, what is worse, you never will; because if you lived to the age of Methusaleh you would always see in me the youth of twenty. Thus is human nature constituted. 5thly, The warmth and tumult of my elocution prove nothing in favour of my thoughts; and the effervescence or the convulsions (if you are pleased so to call them) of a man in my situation prove nothing for or against his state in a natural situation, and in a calmer medium; thus your sentence—'if you forget yourself, even in prison, what will you do when you are in the world?' is wholly devoid of logic; which is not very surprising, for I believe you never were forty-one months in prison. But the

persons who know that the strongest heads are turned in this place, are here very thankful that they are not mad, and they well examine themselves every day to ascertain that they are not so. Further, they are somewhat surprised when they are told that their *punishment* (observe well, that this is your own word, and a fine handle it gives me against you) has not been long enough. 6thly, I must observe (and I trust that you will not, therefore, tax me with self-love, for, seriously speaking, it would be a contemptible sort of self-love), that I have succeeded in every thing I have taken an interest in doing, even in the extremest and most difficult acts of folly; and in truth, good appears to me much easier to do than evil. 7thly, I tell you that I am waiting with a confidence, faith! not very patient, but sincere, complete and tender, for all that you will obtain, and my father grant. 8thly, I tell you that your parody is nonsense, for I am uglier than you ever saw me, if that be possible; and that, in spite of Dupont's ridiculous fears, I am Thersites and not the urchin of Cythera.

"Lastly, I tell you, with reference to the remainder of your letter, that if the consent of the Marquis of Marignane is insisted upon, I shall be here in 1800, it being fully understood that, long before, I shall have passed from the animal to the vegetable kingdom. This I can assure you of. But I would stake my head (the stake of a madman, you will say) that, if I were free,

the collaterals would before eighteen months had elapsed, be in their proper places—that is to say, at their own houses; and I would increase the income derived from the Mariguane estate 50,000 livres a year more, by draining those immense and unwholesome bogs—an art I fully learned in Holland*."

* * * * * *

"I am too ill and in too great pain to write. Your poor brother is sinking, and nothing more is wanting to his evil destiny but to be unable to receive his true pardon, and reap its fruits.

"Speaking of punishments, commutations of punishments, and so forth, and in order that you may mention the subject to me no more, I confess to you that I hold in horror the atrocity of our criminal laws, and do not believe that there is an enlightened honest man upon earth, who, having studied them as I have done, is not of my opinion. These things are beyond the province of women. Present to me the morality of the heart, embellish it with the charms of your sex and your affection, and you will in every respect be doing me a great service; but unhappily for me, I know more than you do about the defects of our political institutions.

"My father, in what you have written to me, repeats a most sensible saying of his friend Richardson; but the saying is badly translated. Richardson makes one

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 6th 1780.

of his characters observe that proverbs are an extract of the sense of all ages and nations, the universal reason. Both Richardson and my father are right. Observe well—for I must explain every thing—I do not this time speak of plagiarism, I only say that my father has met Richardson's idea, and I think it does him credit.

"When I talk of *you both*, I mean yourself and your husband, whom I consider two minds united for my salvation: you from kindness, and sensibility of heart and kindred; he from nobleness and generosity and attachment to my father, whose bowels of compassion are moved by my misfortunes and your intercession. Ask me, as much as you please, for an explanation of my words, for to you I use no ambiguous expression.

"Adieu! How happy am I to find that you have recovered your health, and at having received some of your hand-writing to day. Take care of yourself, and *ora pro nobis*!*"

We find in a letter from Boucher that the steps taken to procure Mirabeau's release were at length on the point of proving successful.

"As it was feared that the Marquis of Mirabeau would not readily make up his mind to apply personally to the ministers for his son's release, it has been agreed upon that Madame du Saillant shall write to M. Amelot

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 14th 1780.

and M. Lenoir. On the receipt of these letters, we are to write to the Marquis, and on receiving his reply, the order will be despatched*".

Mirabeau also continued his exertions.

"He is incomprehensible," wrote the Marquis, "for his talent of usurpation and the ascendency he assumes. He has sent his sister copies of two letters, one to M. de Maurepas, the other to M. Nivernois, extremely well written in a strain of repentance, and of submission to his father; but also in such a strain that Francis I. could not have left his prison with greater dignity. There was forthwith, a reply from the Duke, who 'will be very happy,' and so forth, and *Monsieur le Comte* at full length †. On the other hand my daughter, in conjunction with her husband, wrote to M. de Maurepas for the order; and lastly, I am informed from

* Unpublished letter from Boucher, dated November 17th 1780.

† On the 19th of November 1780, the Duke of Nivernois wrote to Mirabeau as follows:—

"I cannot but be greatly edified by the sentiments you express to me. You ought not to doubt that the moment the families to which you belong have agreed to procure you the satisfaction you desire, I shall readily concur in it. I hasten to assure you of this immediately, *notwithstanding my present cruel situation.*"

This latter sentence refers to the recent loss of his sister-in-law, Madame de Watteville, and of his favourite daughter, widow, for the last twenty-two years, of the Count of Gisors, who was killed at the battle of Crevelt, and whose premature death extinguished the house of Marshal Belleisle, and caused a general mourning. We think it due to the memory of the venerable Duke of Nivernois to relate this act of kindness so rare and so affecting.

high authority that the letter to the minister is to be sent to me for my opinion *."

Mirabeau thanked his sister for what she had done; but she had written only to M. de Maurepas.

" It appears to me," he wrote, " that we forget M. Lenoir, to whom I am under great personal obligations, and whose kindness to me I can never forget, if I would. If you were to write to him a polite note, which he might know came not from yourself alone, it would be of very great advantage to me †."

He wrote to M. Boucher on the same subject.

" Tell me, is it not necessary that I should write directly to M. Lenoir? You cannot doubt my having a full sense of all I owe him. You are his inspirer; but then he has *allowed* himself, and still *allows* himself, to be inspired. It would seem as if my family considered him and M. Ancelot nothing at all in this business; and I am anxious to know from you what I ought to do to repair this neglect. I have an excellent chancellor in you; but do you not want a letter that you can show ‡?"

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to his brother the Bailli, dated November 21st 1780.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 17th 1780.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, same date as the preceding.

The Marquis was urging a similar step in favour of Dupont, and we consider it a duty to the memory of this friend of the family, to insert here the paragraph relating to him.

All now appeared ready for the happy denouément, when an unfortunate circumstance intervened.

"It is now very clear to me, that he dictates in matters of police; but it seems that his friends in authority have rejected the labour, in order to expedite matters more rapidly; for with such minds as theirs, all must be dramatic, and performed, according to rule, within the twenty-four hours. They have taken it into their heads to do him the honours of an accommodation between his mother and me; and to say the truth, this is my own plan, and the only one to which I am attached from duty, as it alone can secure to my children rights for which they have paid dearly enough. As I perceived, however, that my wish was too much calculated upon, I declared, what I wrote to you, that I would authorise the mother,

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"As in your letter to Honoré you mention the Chevalier Scépeaux and Boucher, but not Dupont, who has taken the greatest pains of any, to hammer, unstuff, and furbish up that head-piece of his, and who has stuck to him and still sticks to him through thick and thin, I should feel obliged if you would write him a polite letter upon the event. It will flatter him much, because he has great respect for you, and is one of those who must be led by elasticity."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 9th* 1781.

We must also add that, notwithstanding a very marked difference in political opinions, Mirabeau always preserved a great regard for Dupont. In a letter from the former dated from Bignon, August 3rd 1781, we find some very flattering verses addressed to Dupont on the occasion of his birth-day. We do not insert them here, because Mirabeau, as he himself admits, with a good grace, had no talent for poetry.

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according to law, to make any settlement upon her children; but I would not have my name mentioned in the settlement, nor would I have any accommodation, for I do not require it. These people have, no doubt, been desirous of giving me the spur; for they have suddenly put her cause upon the list for hearing, on the 5th of December, in full court. The cause is nothing; but to drag me suddenly into court, when my friends can scarcely have time to be present, seems to me a hocus-pocus trick. Nevertheless, I have not stirred a peg; but I have plainly told them that I ought to bind the fetters tighter instead of loosening them; and I have suspended the forwarding of the letters from my children to the ministers, until I receive a promise of adjournment of the cause until after New-year's day*."

Dupont became the more alarmed at this new obstacle, because he well knew the Marquis's unbending obstinacy.

"Oh! good angel! instead of advancing, we run the risk of retrograding, but as besiegers retrograde from the breach when they are shot down into the ditch. The Marquis of Mirabeau tells us, point blank, that if we stir he will disavow everything, and God only knows whither such a disavowal would lead us†."

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from Dupont to Boucher, dated November 23rd 1780.

It appears, however, that the condition was soon fulfilled, if we may judge from the following passage in a letter dated the next day.

" I have to inform you, that at the same time the order for his release is given I shall have a *lettre de cachet* that will keep him always under my thumb*.

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* The Marquis depended too much upon his interest with the government. We perceive, in fact, that the ministers determined Mirabeau should remain at the disposal of the King, not of his father. Thus, on the 2nd of December, M. Lenoir wrote to the Marquis as follows :—" The king's order will point out to your son his future place of residence." Five days subsequently, the same magistrate wrote to M. Ancelot :—

" In conformity to your desire, I have written to the Marquis of Mirabeau a letter, of which a copy is enclosed ; and I also have the honour of enclosing a copy of his reply. You will thereby perceive that the settlement of this business depends upon a condition which the Marquis of Mirabeau has no right to impose. He demands that the King's order, which enjoins his son to reside in the place pointed out by him, be addressed to himself, in order that he may act as he thinks proper. The Marquis du Saillant, his son-in-law, to whom I explained how contrary this arbitrary act would be to justice, begged that you would be so obliging as to write to the Marquis of Mirabeau, enclosing to him a copy of the King's order, such as I shall receive it ; and state to him that this order will be addressed to me that I may see to the observance of the necessary forms, in order that, should he propose that the King's commands be carried into effect in any other place, I may, according to any letter he may write to me, receive your instructions and act according to his intentions."

We find that the Marquis at length, whatever reason he may have had, yielded, contrary to his usual custom.

" I find, sir, that the regulations throw a difficulty in the way of the form of order which my children had flattered themselves they

On the 10th of December he will be at the castle, incognito, boarding at the surgeon's house*. The gentleman will now play his great game to get what he can out of his mother. In fine, if this man of semi-freedom minds what he is about, and can refrain from offending his friends and spoiling his own case, he will rule the ministers of the old system, that is to say, ministers of a fluid disposition,—mere effigies†."

We have reason to believe that what the Marquis mistook for "a hocus-pocus trick" was nothing but a

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should obtain in behalf of their brother. They, better than any body else, well knew that the principle of it, or at least an equivalent, was necessary to place me, and the sort of confidence which a long life free from crime and fraud may have inspired, between this young man and the enemies which his past conduct has raised up against him. They trust that they shall obtain this equivalent. But in the meanwhile they represent to me that their brother is suffering; and that having once decided upon his present fate, I cannot wish that any delays of reports and correspondence should defer the promised relief. I therefore, sir, have determined to put into your hands the present memorandum of what I now wish in this matter: that he may still remain under your authority during the first moment of his half-freedom; that he may have the castle of Vincennes for his prison, but that he live there as unknown and retired as possible, and bear the name of M. Honoré. Your kindness, which has always been so useful to him, is more necessary to him than ever. Condescend, sir, to continue it to him, and not to doubt my gratitude."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to M. Lenoir, dated December 8th* 1780.

* The surgeon Fontelliau, who is often mentioned in the "Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes."

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 27th 1780.

very natural circumstance, brought about by causes which had no reference to Mirabeau. The latter thus wrote to Madame du Saillant, on the occasion.

"My kind sister, do you think your poor brother very much alarmed? He is much grieved, but his father has consoled him with a word. The accident is perhaps fortunate which gives me an opportunity of showing him that on his making but a sign, I can always resign myself to patience and suffering *."

Two days after, Mirabeau explained himself to his brother-in-law.

"The generosity of your language is in keeping with your conduct. You wish to have news of my health: it is not at all good. In fact, the rent which you are repairing with so much zeal, has I confess affected me; and as I think I owe it to my father, to my friends, to myself, to respect, to gratitude, and to the dignity of man, to show myself calm and resigned, my inside has been some what ravaged by this exertion, which, after all, was the least I could do in return for the concern which you, my sister, Dupont, and all my other friends displayed on the appearance of this new difficulty †.

In spite of all obstacles, however, the hour of freedom at length struck.

"This day is announced to me as one of regeneration

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated December 8th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Marquis du Saillant, dated December 8th 1780.

and safety. It is now twelve o'clock: will not your husband come and enjoy his triumph *?"

"Dear sister, let your kind heart palpitate, for I have embraced your husband, I have pressed him in my arms, and felt myself pressed in his. I already enjoy this greatest of benefactions—I who scarcely dared invoke pity and indulgence †."

We have a few particulars to give relative to this long looked for event.

"I very much regretted, that with your kind heart you were not present at your brother's release from confinement. But your place was worthily supplied by the Marquis du Saillant. When they met, both were so affected, that neither could advance a single step. It was necessary to support them when they were in each others arms ‡.

"Du Saillant, who went to deliver his brother-in-law, is highly satisfied with him in every respect, and he is no enthusiast. He expected to have found a good deal of bathos and stage effect; instead of which he saw a man much affected, very repentant, extremely submissive, and full of feeling, according to the exaggeration of his enthusiastic temperament,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated December 13th 1780. This date belies that of the December 17th given by P. Chaussard as that of Mirabeau's release

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, with same date.

‡ Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Madame du Saillant, same date as preceding.

towards his father and his family, but at the same time quick and spirited with regard to others. As he disposes of the police, although he cannot leave Vincennes, they took him to Paris to clothe him, for he came out with scarcely a rag to cover him*. He

* This fact, and the avowal of it, which require no comment, are confirmed by numerous details in the "Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes," Vol. I, pages 45 & 127; Vol. II, pages 28, 39, 40, and 41; Vol. III, pages 46, 91, 94, 158, 436, and 581; Vol. IV, pages 150, and 165; and also by several passages in the letters we possess. We will quote from an unpublished letter, dated June 7th 1779, in which Mirabeau says to Boucher: "I am in want of every thing it is true, but the least of my privations in my confinement during the present season, is my want of clothes. Let us attend to the most pressing matters; at most I shall have two jackets and two pair of nankeen trowsers made, if I find I cannot do without them."

We also insert an extract which must excite interest with reference to Mirabeau's poverty, and does honour to his character.

"With regard to clothes, though naked, I will still take patience on young Lavisé's account.

[This young man, son of a turnkey of the donjon, copied Mirabeau's manuscripts, and acted as his secretary.]

"This young fellow, whose natural abilities are good, has the demon of the drama in his head. Le Kain instilled it into him, gave him lessons, and formed him without the knowledge of his father, who now trembles lest he should engage himself in some provincial company of players. The best means of turning his mind from this, is to occupy him and supply him with a little money. It must be admitted that he earns some. I wish, therefore, that you would share what you have of mine between him and Sophie."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated July 9th* 1779.

Mirabeau did not limit his kindness to this single act, for he wrote some time after,—

"The next time you see Lavisé, the son, have the goodness to ask him rather seriously, what connexion he has with travelling

lodged at the house of the clerk of the secret office [Boucher], who always governs him. He went with his brother-in-law to see the Duke of Nivernois, and got through his visit nobly, and with an air of protection. He has grown taller *, and much stouter; and he says that if I am aware of this physical revolution in him, so extraordinary at his age, it will give me some faith in his mental revolution. He has, however, always a tendency to determination of blood to the head, and on the very day of his release he inundated his bed by a bleeding at the nose. He went next day to see his brother-in-law, who showed him the hotel †. On seeing my portrait, he was much agitated, and burst into tears, uttering only the words—'My poor father!' In short, du Saillant does not cease saying that Dupont

theatres, and plays on the Boulevards, and to speak to him with contempt of these things."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 22nd* 1780.

* On this subject the Bailli wrote:—"He and I, in this respect, are alike; for I am assured that I grew several lines taller, from twenty-eight to thirty years of age."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 31st* 1780. The Bailli was nearly six feet * high.

"I am not much surprised at what you state, because I am assured that the same thing happened to myself, and that from twenty-eight to thirty years of age, I grew several lines taller."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated January 1st* 1781.

† Mirabeau also relates the impression it made upon him.

"What I felt was so acute, that another strong emotion crossing

* Nearly six feet six inches, English measure.—TR.

must have hammered him dreadfully. Without wanting faith in this particular, I have still more in the efficacy of bolts and bars, and turnkeys. Forty-two months spent in a place where there is no other society than gothic and gloomy dungeons, and the night howlings from the subterranean vaults and other neighbourhoods, constitute a species of physic that may well remodel a man's mind. Human nature requires misfortune. But we have not yet reached the conclusion; and I will guarantee his wife from his enthusiasm as well as from his follies—the whole as in duty bound *."

The duration and severity of this confinement in the donjon of Vincennes—the general impression produced by the publication of Manuel's collection, and the unfavourable prejudices which it has cast upon Mirabeau's memory—the influence which so long a detention must necessarily have exercised over the prisoner's subsequent career, over his studies, his opinions, his systems, his resolutions, and his private and public life, —have induced us to give this deplorable episode at greater length, by extending the extracts which explain, and, we trust, show it under a new aspect. Once

it, my eyes were covered with a cloud, my head ran round, and I was obliged quickly to get a chair, with such a confusion of ideas as the sight of the universe crumbling to dust around me would not have raised."—*Unpublished letter to Madame du Saillant, dated December 19th* 1780.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 20th 1780.

beyond this particular period of persecution, which stands out in such strong relief in the midst of even a whole life of persecution, we are bound to make our narrative proceed more rapidly, in order to reach those subsequent periods, where important matters will again arrest our progress, and detain us some time.

BOOK X.

HAVING now concluded the principal episode of our work, four books more will enable us to complete the history of Mirabeau's *private* life. Before we proceed with our narrative, however, we may be allowed to dwell for a moment upon the character of an individual to whom we shall scarcely have occasion to allude in Mirabeau's *public* life, and whose absence our readers will perhaps regret, because his mind is equally terse, original, and elevated.

Though we have shown the Marquis of Mirabeau in an unexpected light, we have perhaps drawn him rather under than above his due proportions. Perhaps also, from our fault, the reader has been unable to perceive how much of virtue and of the kindly feelings of human nature were concealed under his inconceivable harshness as a father—how much of lofty knowledge and sincere and generous philanthropy, under pride of lineage, and the vanity of being the chief of a sect.

Our present undertaking is to write the life of Mirabeau, not that of his father. We therefore consider ourselves bound to give, concerning the latter, only such matters as tend to the development of his son's character. But these matters consist wholly of writings and acts of severity; and every thing beyond them which could place the Marquis of Mirabeau in a very different light—that is to say, not in that of a harsh father, but in that of a man and a philosopher—would be merely episodic, and therefore out of place. Had we introduced these things as our narrative advanced, incoherence and prolixity would have been the consequence, and the natural course of events would have been continually interrupted. It was our duty therefore to avoid this, in order not only to preserve unity in our work, but to keep its main object always in view, or at least to take care that our readers did not too often deviate from the direct road by which we were leading them towards it. The system we are bound to pursue is therefore not very favourable to the memory of the Marquis of Mirabeau. But as the character of this individual commands our respect, which, if possible, we would willingly communicate to the public, we think that before we reach that period of our work when the name of this really high-minded man will be mentioned no more, it behoves us to add a few touches to the portrait we have already given of him. These additions will show him to have been a much

better man than he has hitherto appeared; and they are the more to be relied on as they are taken from letters which he wrote without any pretension, and the future publication of which it was impossible he could have foreseen.

We therefore transcribe some short extracts from another series of important letters written by the Marquis of Mirabeau. These letters form no part of the family correspondence, from which we have already taken so much, and shall continue to extract throughout this work. The following fragments belong to a series of letters quite unknown to the public. They were written to a learned Italian, the Marquis Longo, first professor of political economy and afterwards librarian of the Breva at Milan. From this voluminous collection, we have selected portions referring to the studies and writings of the Marquis of Mirabeau, to questions of religious philosophy, and even to politics; and these selections are given in the Appendix to the present volume, to which we trust the reader will turn, excited not only by the curiosity which we hope we have raised in him with regard to this singular man, but likewise by the merit of his letters themselves, so original, so picturesque, and so well suited to the modern taste of innovation and boldness of style. In this latter quality the Marquis of Mirabeau was very remarkable, and he jocularly characterises it in the following paragraphs, which we transcribe as a conclusion to this digression.

"I thank you for your indulgence regarding my style, which I should be ashamed of, if I had not swallowed all my shame long ago. I wish I had less deserved your indulgence; but having been educated in a mountain castle, with my three brothers, by a private tutor at thirty crowns* a year, and thrown into a regiment to live in idleness at thirteen years of age, I had no master until I was three and twenty. He was an excellent and patient Aristarchus, one of the best and most prudent writers of the present age†; but he was unable to temper my vivacity, which carried me too far. A warm, rich and germinating heart rendered the epistolary style familiar to me. Having naturally a good ear, I could have worked up my prose as Boileau did his verses; but I never cared about it; and if Rousseau, for instance, had been troubled with my business, my family, or my station, he would have been unable to write a single volume after his own fashion. Now, your humble servant, independently of what will be published, which is perhaps as voluminous as all you have seen, has fifty quarto and twelve folio volumes at least of what is really nothing but scribbling. Abundance, I know, is the nature of the wild plum-tree; and provided it yields wherewith to supply the people with a good drink, it would be a pity to

* Less than £4 sterling.—Tr.

† Mirabeau, as we have already stated, spoke in the same terms of Lefranc of Pompignan.

lop off any of its branches or to graft it in order to produce four or five fine plums for the table of an epicure*."

"My style, formed like an oyster-shell, is so overcharged with different layers of ideas, that to make it intelligible would require a punctuation invented on purpose, were it worth the trouble. But what would be the use of an invention at this period of interregnum, marked by a relaxation of all literary discipline in our language, which, like our army, is never in want of any thing but generals. What would it avail at this present time, when my sentences, instead of being drawn up in proper line of review and battle, are, in my editions, most of them orphans†, so confused, even by the punctuation, that I can no longer understand them myself; but what must they be when words are substituted, which some invisible and facetious imp appears to have selected on purpose to produce absurd and laughable blunders. As I have risked many new expressions, I am much exposed to rash opinions, which I admit I deserve; but it follows that I am not understood. What a pity‡!"

"* * * * * * Notwithstanding all

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated January 17th 1777.

† Almost all the works of the Marquis of Mirabeau were published in foreign countries, and anonymously.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated August 28th 1777.

my excuses, I have followed your advice of plenary indulgence, in reperusing my manuscript—which I did not formerly do—for to reperuse one's own work is equivalent to examining one's face in a looking-glass. However, I love my own prose, because it is like myself; and I am, as you know, a very Marplot from impatience. But though abundant, it is not less full of thought. Some and many of those pangs of the conscience of intellect termed taste, say to me, as well as to others: 'What idle prating!'—but like the cock of Limoges, the first Lemousin Baron is infatuated with, and sleeps to, the noise of his own crowing *.

* * * * * *

"Add to what I have said, numerous typographical blunders. In any other style such blunders are tolerated, but in mine, the misplacing of a single comma makes nonsense. You would laugh to see me reading my own sentences two or three times over in order to comprehend my own meaning; and then concluding my task with a saying the very reverse of that pronounced by the Eternal upon the creation, and which may be termed an interpreter of truth well charged for its mission. But independently of the mistakes making nonsense, there are others quite laughable. My publisher, a fellow of good sound sense, in the full meaning of the term, has sometimes tried in his

* Same letter. In right of his wife, the Marquis had the title of "First Baron of Limoges."

own way to render me intelligible. For instance, I had written: "A conqueror cannot bear to *see himself passed;*" but the good man judiciously substituted "to be surpassed."

We now resume our narrative.

Mirabeau having quitted the donjon of Vincennes, undertook, before he did any thing else, to obtain his mother's consent to a private deed of separation from the Marquis, in order to put an end to the scandalous lawsuit between them, now on the eve of being brought to a public trial. He employed all his eloquence to soothe the Marchioness, and make her enter into his views. This fact is confirmed by a letter inserted in the Vincennes collection, which is one of the most eloquent that Mirabeau ever penned*. On this occasion, his father did him justice.

"I am able to say on my honour and conscience, that following up close, as I do, the very active pace of Mr. Honoré†, I find that he goes straight-forward on the right road, frankly and warmly, and with a good heart. Nothing in the world, or even in the universe, is so impossible as the matter he has taken in hand. The harsh features of the Count may smoke as they list, nothing good and useful can proceed from the

* Original letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. pages 58 to 67. Three other equally remarkable letters are to be found in vol ii. pp. 12—291, and vol. iv. p. 305.

† The reader must bear in mind, that Mirabeau, on leaving his prison, was to bear the name only of Honoré.

parallax of their two heads; but he, and his agents whom I perceive to be much discouraged, will fully discover, at least, what my *respectable adverse party* is*. Yesterday, for the twentieth time, he saw his mother, not *tête-à-tête*—for he cannot succeed in obtaining a private conference—but in the presence of Berthelot, Mazurier, and the Abbé Larieu†. The result is that Berthelot is to bring him, this morning, proposals of conditions. The storming, the passion, the fury, the rage, and the madness which he witnessed, leave him little hope that these proposals will be reasonable. The moon will decide the question‡."

Mirabeau failed in his attempt, the success of which was rendered impossible by a variety of circumstances, all explained in the letter before us, but upon which we shall dwell no longer, because the fact itself, which is only of secondary importance, not having been alluded to by any of Mirabeau's former biographers, we are not bound to enter into minute explanations. This plan of silence upon certain topics we always pursue whenever we meet with circumstances, quite unknown to the public, which are better buried in oblivion, and their omission does not injure our narra-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 26th 1780.

† The Marchioness of Mirabeau's agents, by whom she was governed.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated December 31st 1780.

tive. On the present occasion we are content to state that Mirabeau's exertions had no other effect than that of irrevocably alienating from himself the affections of his mother*, who, till then, had dearly loved him. Her perverse advisers had brought her to consider her son the accomplice of their joint persecutor, the moment he ceased to be his father's victim.

Before we quit this subject, we must notice an imputation which has been often and wrongfully cast upon Mirabeau, that of writing libels alternately upon his father at the instigation of his mother, and upon the latter at the command of his father.

Mirabeau himself states that he never published but one statement, which was written in Holland†; that scarcely one half of it was of his own composition‡; that it was as hastily written, as it was inconsiderate and criminal;—it was, in short, "begun, copied, printed, and distributed in a week§." His grief and indignation induced him to grant this to the grief and indignation of the Marchioness of Mirabeau,

* This fact is attested by the following passage in a letter from Sophie, dated January 18th 1781.

"You are then at variance with your mother. How could she resist your arguments, your tenderness, and her own affection? She is running headlong to her ruin; this greatly affects me, for she was so kind to us, especially to me!"

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 70.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 414. The remainder was written by Groubert de Groubental, the advocate whose signature it bore.

§ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 236.

who thought herself and him implicated in a most monstrous accusation*. The mistake of biographers, who suppose him guilty several times of the same thing, originates first, in the strong expressions used by the Marchioness, who, in the several cases published by her, deplores her son's misfortunes; and secondly, in the care she took to republish, in a case drawn up for her by Lacroix Frainville, an advocate who afterwards acquired great and well merited celebrity, the letters written by Mirabeau from Dijon to M. de Malesherbes, soliciting his release from prison, and a revision of the judgment against him by default in the case of Villeneuve Moans†. Mirabeau, who took every opportunity of explaining this business, refers to it in one of his testamentary letters, from which we have extracted in a former part of this work; we allude to the one he wrote to his father on the 2nd of May 1779, after he had made preparations for committing suicide, which he was deterred from doing by the humanity of M. Lenoir. He expresses himself in the following terms.

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 100, 416, 481. We have before quoted from a letter in which the Marquis of Mirabeau himself speaks of "the most atrocious and most perfidious suggestions" which misled his son. This expression proves that the horrible accusation which could only have come from him, was not made by him. *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 30th* 1780.

† See Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 354.

"I swear to you that it never entered my head to do what you have published I did,—either to see you in a court of justice, or to become a party to my mother's suit against you. The frankness with which I dare to express my thoughts, at a moment when I no longer require the assistance of any human being, but merely to satisfy my conscience, must convince you of the truth of my assertion."

Again we have evidence to confirm this assertion, and it lies in the very testimony of his detractors—that is to say, his father and his uncle. But to avoid the inconvenience of forestalling our own narrative, as well as that of repetitions, we shall place this evidence in Book XIV, in which we purpose giving an account of the different works written by Mirabeau from 1772 to 1783.

Mirabeau took up his temporary abode at Boucher's, having yet been unsuccessful in obtaining leave to return to his paternal dwelling, or even to see his father.

"You ask me if I see him? No, doubtless. I reply to him only under dictation and through the medium of Garçon *. I shall allow him to see me very soon. I however found myself face to face with him, one day,

* The Marquis's Secretary, already mentioned. His patron termed him his *Fidus Achates*, and did not separate from him till death. Having lived together during forty-six years, they died within a fortnight of each other.

who thought herself and him implicated in a most monstrous accusation*. The mistake of biographers, who suppose him guilty several times of the same thing, originates first, in the strong expressions used by the Marchioness, who, in the several cases published by her, deplores her son's misfortunes; and secondly, in the care she took to republish, in a case drawn up for her by Lacroix Frainville, an advocate who afterwards acquired great and well merited celebrity, the letters written by Mirabeau from Dijon to M. de Malesherbes, soliciting his release from prison, and a revision of the judgment against him by default in the case of Villeneuve Moans†. Mirabeau, who took every opportunity of explaining this business, refers to it in one of his testamentary letters, from which we have extracted in a former part of this work; we allude to the one he wrote to his father on the 2nd of May 1779, after he had made preparations for committing suicide, which he was deterred from doing by the humanity of M. Lenoir. He expresses himself in the following terms.

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as I left Desjobert's*. His eye was piercing, his appearance strong and healthy. He cast down his eyes, drew on one side as far as he could, and I passed on†." The father and son had not met before during nine years!

Another and more serious matter now occupied Mirabeau's attention; this was his appeal from the judgment of the Bailliage of Pontarlier, pronounced March 10th 1777. On this matter we derive our materials from the family correspondence.

"I think I informed you that I made Honoré give up the impossible thing he had undertaken‡. But we are now entering the real labyrinth from which I alone can withdraw him: and this is the task of replacing his head upon his shoulders. So long as there was any hope of his beginning his new career by bringing his mother to terms, I declined meddling with this: first, in order not to complicate matters; and secondly, because it was too soon for me to place any dependance upon him. Nevertheless, having stopped him in the other business, I could not refuse him permission to proceed in his own way with this; and behold! the lawyers are already at work §!"

* Desjobert was the Marquis's counsel.

† Uupublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 26th 1781.

‡ A private deed of separation between the Marquis and Marchioness of Mirabeau.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 21st 1781.

We shall not here repeat the unnecessary details given by Peuchet and Vitry, concerning the preliminary arrangements in this matter, and the steps necessary for obtaining a communication of the proceedings; neither shall we again repeat nor extract what Mirabeau says in his correspondence and statements concerning the illegalities contained in these proceedings,—such as the irregularity of the inquest, the tampering with witnesses, the falseness of the evidence, supposition of facts, gross partiality, and the animosity of the judges. The time is come for us to proceed straight to the results, attending always to the development of character, which is our principal object. We therefore continue to extract from the family correspondence.

"My rascal, as bold and enterprising as we, at his age, were discreet and shy, goes on pushing his point with M. de Maurepas with whom he is at play; also with the keeper of the seals, against whom he is pleading, and is driving straight towards letters of abolition—a thing very possible; for there are times and places for using a pole and leaping beyond all rules. Nevertheless, he was suddenly stopped by the interests of his accomplice, and wanted to go to cassation. I therefore thought it high time that I should come forward and place myself at the head of the business. These persons, issue of my loins, have forced me, at sixty years of age, to undergo my novitiate with Jews, spies, police-officers, placemen, *ed altra simil canaglia;*

—thus behold me, at sixty years of age, an apprentice criminalist! In truth, the honest people who, for ten years past, have followed me through every possible difficulty, say they never yet saw me shrink; but I know the weight of man's passing opinion, and must act as if it were against me, leaving myself the power of making use of Honoré in the best manner I can. He catches me upon the sharp point of his intellect; but you well know the nerve and chyle of people of his race; and I feel more each day that the intellect is only a tool, and that rectitude is in the heart. Declaring, therefore, that I place myself at the head of the business, is to declare that I will treat with the parties. But here I have two, whose interests are absolutely opposed to each other; namely, the Ruffeys, whose daughter is under sentence of condemnation, her reintegration being common to us; and her husband, a mere man-machine, but whose interests are represented by Valdahon,—this man having been introduced into the family by a lawsuit that made a noise, and out of revenge for which his father-in-law married again. This makes a complication of interests, and separate treaties, all of which must be brought to a single point. For the present the lawyers are at work dissecting the proceedings, in order to expose the flaws therein. At the same time, I am proceeding to negociate, for I must do so in more than one way. Besides this, the two parliaments must be indeed well

disposed; for the *noblesse de robe**, insulted by the *noblesse de l' épée*, especially when of high rank, is to be feared in a case like the present †."

This appeal gave Mirabeau constant occupation. His father, always invisible to him, guided him by letter, and continued to give an account of him to his uncle.

"All is extraordinary to this man, and every thing must long remain in the regions of the imagination. What is not so is, that he appears to have always the same confidence and docility, and that he is never idle night or day, showing as much ardour for work, and activity in business, as obedience. On my part—as I know that this man, who is drawn to the right by his heart, and to the left by his head, which is always four yards from him, is made up of reflection like a

* The families of Ruffey and Monnier had charges and alliances in the parliaments of Burgundy and Franche-Comté.

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 21st 1781. Such a view of the case could not but increase the Bailli's hatred to the nobles of the Robe, and he replied—

"I should fear more than all the rest the *vendetta* of the ragamuffins in gowns. This is the worst part of the business. It was as he contemplated this species of men that God exclaimed, 'Corrupta est omnis carnis.'—*Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 2nd* 1781.

"Therefore I have long been convinced, that if corruption disappeared from the face of the earth it would be again found in the courts of justice."—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 4th* 1781.

looking-glass; as I know that his attraction, his situation, and his talents, will lead him to cut a figure in an age when words have no sound, writings no fixed character, rights no reality, and duties no authority, —when all is conducted as at Lilliput, that is to say, so far as regards dimunitiveness, but without foundation or principles;—I endeavour to pour into him my head, my soul, my heart, and all,—the sound and available knowledge produced by a long course of study and meditation*. I think he is beginning to conceive that at sixty-six a man has a longer nose than at thirty, and that good counsel may be drawn from an elderly gentleman who never was a dupe but for his own convenience, and on that great principle, derived from a constant and fruitful reading of history, namely, that the most skilful and bustling make a hundred-and-thirty sword thrusts in water, for each effective thrust, and that all the intrigues of the Palatine, Longueville, Châtillon, Chevreuse, and Montbazon, sleep in the same grave, and effected nothing but what would have happened without them†. I think he is convinced, at present, that the true road to distinction is the most perfect honesty, and that this alone can lead to greatness. Not that, with the

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 8th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Jan. 12th 1781.

advances he has made, the age in which he lives, his disposition, a certain fund of lightheartedness, and that terrible 'gift of familiarity,' as Gregory the Great terms it—a gift which makes him turn about great men as he would faggots of sticks—I ever dreamt of making him (*magnum opus!*) a man with the delicacy of his grandfather, his uncle, or even his father; but he is well persuaded that I must have him an honest man or nothing. With regard to the matter in hand concerning him, I could not get the cases drawn up by counsel until this week. I have full powers from the Ruffeys, who are really excellent people, and timid too, and whose confidence in and reliance upon my equity makes me quite ashamed*.

"Nevertheless, nothing yet comes to a point in Honoré's case. He has the best advantages in the world in actions, talents, disposition, and friends, to make the fortune of a *roué;* and he would go far, even now,—if far he could go in a country where nothing is far—where there are no longer any other pleasures than those of coteries—where, in one word, all is perishing†; for, thanks to the presumption of the ignorant who are duped by rogues! each day the cord that is strangling the state‡ is drawn tighter,

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, already quoted, dated March 8th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated Feb. 7th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 13th 1781.

and fresh matches are in readiness to fire the mine now preparing under the public territory*."

The Bailli, on the other hand, expressed himself almost in the same manner concerning his nephew.

"Notwithstanding what may be said of the past, if Honoré will bespatter the public a little less, and be a little more methodical, the very noise he makes, not less than his nature, will render him the Corypheus of the times; for he is a good actor, a man of intellect with almost genius, neither shy nor timid (qualities which put our noses out of joint, if our noses have been put out of joint). You may be assured that he is calculated for all the humbugs of society; and it is this, and only this, that he is now pursuing†."

"You are right," the Marquis replied; "he is come in full time, since the time for people of his stamp is come; and if he had less of exuberance, and one inch less of folly, he would have made the greatest of fortunes by his very defects, a thing which no honest man can do in these times. But to keep him above water, and make him return to honesty, are the very devil, and I am at a loss how they are to be done‡".

Mirabeau, however, employed his time well, if we are to credit Dupont's testimony.

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 10th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 7th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 11th 1781.

"I am a witness that our friend Gabriel, or Honoré, or whatever you are pleased to call him, is surcharged beyond measure with business and work. His father, whom I have had the happiness of inducing to place the greatest confidence in him, gives him opportunity as well as the right of showing himself to all those who are prejudiced against him—to all his relatives and connexions—under a favourable aspect, and as pursuing a most noble and prudent line of conduct*."

The Marquis said the same thing.

"At Versailles he behaved well and displayed great ability. I had allowed him to go thither in continuation of the character he is playing here, and to give him, according to my plan, an opportunity of doing public penance within the church, instead of spending years at the door, according to the natural form†. Meanwhile, I know, by the combined accounts of those who see him constantly, that he is no longer the man he appeared to us. He is now formed; he now contains himself, and is even imposing, in spite of his extreme vivacity, which he continues to keep under controul. Since the time I desired that he should forget every thing and become exactly like a sheet of white paper, he has turned his confinement to good

* Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to Sophie, dated February 26th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1781.

account, having learnt English, Greek, Italian, and Spanish, and deeply studied the ancients, especially Tacitus, whose works he is translating. His mind, ever penetrating, has become correct; and his powers of intellect are doubled since he has begun to expand. He feels himself at his ease, and pursues the right road. He has the glance of an eagle."

This is certainly a very unusual form of expression from the pen of the Marquis, whose praises, however, could not long remain unqualified.

"I spend my life," he wrote three days after, "in cramming him, by letter, with principles and with all I know; for this man, always the same in his machinal endowments, has, by his long and solitary studies, done nothing more than increase the jumble of matters in his head, which forms a library turned topsy-turvy; and perfect his skill in dazzling with superficials, for he has inhaled formula of every thing, but can substantiate nothing†. I must speedily look to this, for his head is a positive furnace, and his talents and facility are so great that, of necessity, the poor devil must be withdrawn from amid snares and danger. He must have a guide; and this guide must be either you or me. Assuredly I shall be unable to get the better

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 13th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 16th 1781.

of all the talents for society which he possesses, as you know, and which, morosely speaking, befit him for the office of a good-for-nothing fellow. I neither flatter myself that I can effect this, nor shall I make the attempt. I feel that it would require three times more energy than I possess; and if my failing to act was not a want of duty to my ancestors who now surround me, I should long ago have done as d'Orvilliers* did, with the reservation that I should have selected your place of residence for that of my retirement. But I cannot do this without spoiling every thing, and, in my particular sphere, yielding to the wicked an advantage to which they are not entitled†."

"La Saillanette‡, an *indefatigable deprecatrix*", and her husband, pressed the Marquis to see his son.

"They do not cease assuring me, that it is by word of mouth this man requires me to govern and ripen him, and feed him with my principles, plans and documents; he being very sensitive, and unable to be guided except by me. I know this very well, and I also know that he believes it. But you are aware of

* An allusion to Count d'Orvilliers, who, after long and glorious services in the navy, yielded to the fatigue of his lengthened labours and to the grief arising from the loss of a beloved wife, and suddenly withdrew to his estate, whence he soon after entered the ecclesiastical school of St. Magloire.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 20th 1781.

‡ Madame du Saillant.

the manner of thinking of such people: something is always due to them. I am continually assured that it is by no means difficult to make him wince; that nothing can be said to him directly without his eyes, his lips, and the heightened colour of his cheeks betraying that all within him is in rumour; but the least show of affection makes him burst into tears, and he would jump into the fire for you. It cannot have escaped your recollection that, during his childhood, when he was only a monstrous male of his species, both physically and morally, he used to say, and even to persuade those who did not know him, that we acted injudiciously towards him, and did not go the right way to work with him. My love of peace, which perhaps partakes of indolence, has always made me dread cohabiting with this turbulent emanation from his intractable mother. His marriage with an heiress of his own choice seemed to separate us, which was an advantage to both. He afterwards ruined himself, and me too, and has not deserved well of me. Must it now become my duty, under the affliction of a strangury, which the greatest congeniality of temper can alone enable me to bear, to take such a companion? I confess that I have great difficulty in making up my mind to it; for it is sufficient to have been, during forty years, a martyr to perpetuation*."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 15th 1781.

A domestic event now intervened: the long-debated question was decided in due course of law, and, in spite of the lengthened defence of the Marquis of Mirabeau, his wife obtained a judicial separation and the full enjoyment of her property*. The Marquis thus expresses himself on the subject:

"On receiving this intelligence, and replying 'So much the better, for my horses which will not have to take me to thank the judges,' I prophesy to all, that this new order of things will become heavier each day, and kill me at last. Not only have I lost most of my witnesses, but the dearest and most intimate of those who remain are unable to judge me. I must be myself and have my own memory, and have spent the days and the nights with myself that I have done, to know whether I am treated as I deserve, at least according to our own feeble views. And as, from the hair of my head to my toe-nails, I am tied up and bound with cords at the bottom of the abyss, at the end of my long life, which has become so painful ever since I espoused discord and engendered plunder, let it suffice for you to know, that when the other judgment† was pronounced, my mind was made up, and

* By a decree of the Grand Chamber of the Parliament of Paris of the 18th May 1781.

† A judgment, dated February 14th, 1777, afterwards set aside, entirely in favour of the Marchioness, with regard to very considerable claims which she had set up.

no one knew it. I negociated the whole through Nicolai*, who is dead. All my family were armed against me except the only sound member†, who was in good hands. I intended leaving my power of attorney with Du Saillant, and with an annuity of 3000 livres, withdrawing to Tuscany; and I had the Grand Duke's word that none of my children should be allowed to enter his dominions, except with my own consent. But now I have obtained Honoré's release; and I have duties to perform towards him, for he is in want of me. On the day this judgment was delivered, I received marks of friendship which cheered up my heart a little‡." That girl, Du Sail-

* The Abbé Nicolai was the chargé d'affaires, at Paris, of Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany. The Abbé died in 1780. On that occasion the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote—

" He was an excellent man; and as he was indefatigable in doing good, he would have done much more had he lived. He was a sort of mortar among nations, a diplomatic *pozzolana*, which neither the sun nor the frost could scale."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated October 24th* 1780.

† Madame du Saillant.

‡ Sophie, in her solitude, took great interest in this event.

" The situation," she wrote to Mirabeau, "in which you describe your father to be, affects me most powerfully. He was already so interesting to me. The day on which he yields, and receives you back into favour, will render him still dearer to me."—*Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated May 24th* 1781.

Whatever, at a later period, were the feelings, rather suggested than spontaneous, of the Countess of Mirabeau, she was dee[illegible]

lant, who had the rage of bringing home her brother, bestirred herself and entreated, and turned and twisted me in every way. It was urged, that as the hostile cabal had spread a report that the success of my law-suit was to be the signal of my son's return to my house, this was the time to prove the contrary; and besides, I could no longer leave my son in the streets, or in the house of another person, as that would quite prevent him, &c. I merely replied, that the circumstance did not bind me to do anything extraordinary. Boucher, at whose house you know he lives, came with

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afflicted at this event, of which she speaks in a manner that induces us to notice it here, more especially as it is the proposition of some future developments in our work.

" I cannot tell you how much I am grieved. I dare not express to my father all that I feel. My uncle (the Bailli) mentioned it to me with tears in his eyes, and you may imagine how much this affected me, and truly it would have melted a rock; I would willingly have accompanied him to Bignon; for you must know better than any body else, that I have always evidently wished to to be again in the midst of a family from whom I have received so much kindness. But I represented, that in my present situation with M. de Mirabeau, it was impossible for me to go to his father's house, at the risk of meeting him there, or with the sad necessity of excluding him from it, and depriving all his family of seeing him. Notwithstanding all this, I mentioned the matter to my father, who, though much attached to my father-in-law, and greatly regretting the misfortune that has befallen us, was not of opinion that I should go to Bignon. This is sufficiently telling you that I am unable to follow my inclination, having no other rule of conduct than my father's will."—*Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 5th* 1781.

no one knew it. I negociated the whole through Nicolai*, who is dead. All my family were armed against me except the only sound member†, who was in good hands. I intended leaving my power of attorney with Du Saillant, and with an annuity of 3000 livres, withdrawing to Tuscany; and I had the Grand Duke's word that none of my children should be allowed to enter his dominions, except with my own consent. But now I have obtained Honoré's release; and I have duties to perform towards him, for he is in want of me. On the day this judgment was delivered, I received marks of friendship which cheered up my heart a little‡." That girl, Du Sail-

* The Abbé Nicolai was the chargé d'affaires, at Paris, of Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany. The Abbé died in 1780. On that occasion the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote—

"He was an excellent man; and as he was indefatigable in doing good, he would have done much more had he lived. He was a sort of mortar among nations, a diplomatic *pozzolana*, which neither the sun nor the frost could scale."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated October 24th* 1780.

† Madame du Saillant.

‡ Sophie, in her solitude, took great interest in this event.

"The situation," she wrote to Mirabeau, "in which you describe your father to be, affects me most powerfully. He was already so interesting to me. The day on which he yields, and receives you back into favour, will render him still dearer to me."—*Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated May 24th* 1781.

Whatever, at a later period, were the feelings, rather suggested than spontaneous, of the Countess of Mirabeau, she was deeply

lant, who had the rage of bringing home her brother, bestirred herself and entreated, and turned and twisted me in every way. It was urged, that as the hostile cabal had spread a report that the success of my law-suit was to be the signal of my son's return to my house, this was the time to prove the contrary; and besides, I could no longer leave my son in the streets, or in the house of another person, as that would quite prevent him, &c. I merely replied, that the circumstance did not bind me to do anything extraordinary. Boucher, at whose house you know he lives, came with

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afflicted at this event, of which she speaks in a manner that induces us to notice it here, more especially as it is the proposition of some future developments in our work.

" I cannot tell you how much I am grieved. I dare not express to my father all that I feel. My uncle (the Bailli) mentioned it to me with tears in his eyes, and you may imagine how much this affected me, and truly it would have melted a rock; I would willingly have accompanied him to Bignon; for you must know better than any body else, that I have always evidently wished to to be again in the midst of a family from whom I have received so much kindness. But I represented, that in my present situation with M. de Mirabeau, it was impossible for me to go to his father's house, at the risk of meeting him there, or with the sad necessity of excluding him from it, and depriving all his family of seeing him. Notwithstanding all this, I mentioned the matter to my father, who, though much attached to my father-in-law, and greatly regretting the misfortune that has befallen us, was not of opinion that I should go to Bignon. This is sufficiently telling you that I am unable to follow my inclination, having no other rule of conduct than my father's will."—*Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 5th* 1781.

the others. He is a man well broken in to harness, being cold and prudent. After dinner, he began to entreat me. On a sudden his chest began to swell, his eyes to fill with tears, and he said to me with sobs: 'Whatever prejudices, Sir, you may entertain against my profession, I am a man prone to good—the proof of this is, that I am very poor. Well, sir! I offer myself as a security for your son. You shall be satisfied with him; and if ever I have deserved any thing from you....' He could say no more, but rose and rushed to the drawing-room door. He was agitated to suffocation. I followed, and having embraced him, assured him that, though my plans had been very different, he should present my son to me. The emotion of such a man, who is indeed poor*, though powerful in his class, really affected me, and I spoke in such a strain, that the ensuing evening, after having given notice to the Chevalier Scépeaux, whose Bayard bosom has much of my affection, and has great influence over me, Boucher and the family suddenly

* Among a thousand proofs of this fact, we offer to our readers only one, which is contained in the following passage from a letter written by Mirabeau to his sister.

"I knew, I know still, and I see with my own eyes, that this Boucher, who has a ridiculously small salary for so confidential an office, this man who has uncommon talents, tried and acknowledged integrity, is but in indifferent circumstances, though holding an appointment which, in the hands of certain individuals, would be an inexhaustible mine of wealth."—*Unpublished letter, dated December 19th* 1780.

brought me Honoré, and whilst he was at my feet, the chevalier embraced me saying: 'He is the prodigal son!' I told Honoré, as I gave him my hand, that having long since pardoned an enemy, I offered my hand to a friend, and that I hoped some day to be able to bless a son. By such means he is now in the house. I found him grown much stouter, particularly about the shoulders, neck, and head. He has our own form, construction, and gait, save and except his quicksilver attributes. His hair is very beautiful, his forehead is very open, and so are his eyes. His accent is much less studied now than it was formerly, though it is a little so still. His appearance is natural and unaffected, and his complexion is not of so high a colour as it used to be. In every other respect, he is just the same as when you last saw him*.

"You have no idea of the effect of the scene of last Tuesday upon poor Dupont, who is still in grief†,

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 22nd 1781.

† Dupont had just lost, March 20th 1781, his friend and benefactor, the virtuous Turgot.

From Turgot's connexion with some of the Economists, his elevation to the ministry in August 1774 must have given satisfaction and hope to the Marquis of Mirabeau, who, in his letters of that period, speaks warmly on the subject. Subsequently, with reference to the mutiny of May 1775, the cause or pretence of which was, the high price of corn, the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote:—

"As for Turgot, his courage is indomitable, but he is good by himself. The King also shows himself,—this we must in justice

whom no exhortation could console, and who, on this occasion, forgot his own sorrows, threw to the wind

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admit. He mildly said that it was not thus he must be addressed, and that nothing could be obtained from him through fear. He has written thus to Turgot: 'I did not go out, not because I was afraid, —for I know not what fear is, and I shall, I think, be in no hurry to learn it,—but because there are so few persons who wish for order, that they must not be lost sight of.'"—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 3rd* 1775.

The Marquis afterwards wrote:—

"We have in favour of good only the King and Turgot, but both are firm."

The unhappy monarch spoke in the same sense a short time before he allowed his minister to be taken from him by court intrigue. "There are only Turgot and myself," said he, "who love the people."

"Yet," adds the Marquis of Mirabeau, "although active and invincible in opposition, Turgot and his master are weak and unskilful against court cunning, insinuations, and well-timed entreaty; and I think that Turgot will not go far, but he will retire covered with glory. I wish the King had the courage to practise his virtues." —*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 9th* 1775.

Let us add a passage from one of the Bailli's replies:

"Nothing surprises me but the atrocity or stupidity of those who dare to teach the populace the secret of their strength. I know not whence people derive their confidence that the public ferment will be stopped. If I am not deceived, such mutinies have already preceded revolution."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated May 25th* 1775.

At a subsequent period, the chief of the Economists disowned Turgot.

"Be assured," he wrote, "that I do not see, and have not seen, either Turgot, D'Albert (lieutenant of police), or even Dupont. The proud knaves who surround the former attack none so strongly as they do the Economists, and people are beginning to say that we

the burning agony of his own grief, — in which, perhaps, there was a little of the smoke of disappointed

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are enemies. This is all I wished, and nothing annoyed me so much as the connexion said to exist between us."— *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 29th* 1775.

At a still later period the Marquis passed a judgment upon Turgot, which, always excepting the harsh and cutting terms in which it is expressed, is not wholly contradicted by history. This, whilst it does justice to his talents, virtue, and patriotism, imputes to him inexperience, precipitancy, and a want of knowledge of mankind.

"It is said," writes the Marquis, "that Messrs. Turgot and Malesherbes are going to Italy. In this case you will see two men with good hearts and crooked understandings; and I know of nothing more unfit for governing than those two qualities."— *Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated August 31st* 1776.

"You have rightly judged Turgot, in times past and present. His is a cracked head, and philosophical after the fashion of those gentlemen whose political systems were to confound every other. As to his plan of public revenue, he is not the inventor of it. But his premature mode of announcing it, his ideal and awkward mode of adopting it, and his obstinate and disdainful manner of carrying it into effect, would have thrown him back a whole century, if it were possible. A man in office must possess either natural dignity and a correct judgment, or else an infinity of talent. He had nothing of the kind, being only a virtuous dreamer, and, when he acted, a true breaker of necks."— *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 29th* 1778.

To these notes we add some observations on Turgot, written about the same period by Mirabeau, who admired that minister without fanaticism, exposing his faults whilst he justly praised his virtues, his arguments, and his patriotic intentions.

The following quotation is taken from the "Mémoires du Ministère du Duc d'Aguillon," by the Abbé Soulavie, who composed these memoirs, as we shall show in Book XIV of the present work, by

ambition—to become one of us, and think of nothing but our concerns*."

employing and working up reflections, notes and extracts of which Mirabeau wrote the greater portion in the donjon of Vincennes.

"In 1775, systems awkwardly conducted, and insidiously thwarted, led to some popular disturbances. M. Turgot, whose views contain some sublime things, but who is acquainted with man only through the medium of books, comes too bluntly to the point on all occasions, and, in spite of the age he lives in, and the character of his nation, would fain be the Cato of France. He wanted to reform a monarchy incapable of reform by any known means, and straighten by main force an old uprooted tree. M. Turgot gives lessons to the young King, without perceiving that instead of lessons he ought to give him firmness and a will *to will*. The King desires the good of his nation; placed in the centre of corruption and disorder, he will lament their existence, but the fear of acting wrongly will render him inactive. Lastly, and I must say all, I think that M. Turgot, philosopher though he be, is somewhat of an enthusiast, and does not see all that surrounds him. He is like a man placed upon the lantern of the dome of the Invalides, who does not perceive the ant-hill swarming beneath his feet. From such a height he trumpets forth most excellent views, and principles, and systems; but where are the means of putting them in practice? When a house is pulled down, there must be a place to deposit the materials until they are required in the rebuilding. In a great state like this, which is very old, and full of abuses, three things are requisite: to obtain a perfect knowledge of its present condition, to observe existing data, and to agree and pursue the best means for quitting the one and gaining the other. I certainly find genius in the articles of the Encyclopædia, entitled 'Existence,' 'Etymology,' and 'Expansibility.' M. Turgot is the author of them. They are well written, and full of matter, but not of such matter as is required in the government of an empire. In the present state of

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 28th 1781.

The Marquis was induced, by the loss of his law-suit, to modify his plans, so long and unhappily pursued, of paternal and domestic goverment.

"I have told my children, and especially my son, who shows, in his way, a great inclination to be docile, that all has turned out ill according to and against my cogitations—that providence has shown me that it has not set its seal upon the consummation of my long and rough labours—that I have worked out my time, and proved sufficiently, at my risk and peril, and fortune and humiliation, that dishonour and evil conduct in my own family, are not at all to my taste; that I am a witness for myself to having fulfilled my duties towards my family and towards society—that I do not feel myself more crushed by the curse upon me, than I was before puffed out by infatuation; but that, henceforth, remembering the powerful Homer, who reduced old age to the only part it is able to play, to prating, the precursor of dotage, and at most to giving advice, I have begun a new, but quiet and passive existence, regretting even my inability to resign my house, my person, and my maintenance—that I shall appear ostensibly to support my children, when it is absolutely necessary, and secretly to give them advice whenever they really think me fit to do so—remembering nevertheless that as they have reached years of discretion,

affairs, therefore, M. Turgot will never be a great minister, nor will he ever long remain a minister."—Page 185.

it is for themselves to conduct their own affairs, and for my son to reset his head, and re-sew himself together piece by piece—that, lastly the sound members of my family will always be acknowledged by me, and the remainder vomited forth and forgotten*."

The discouragement of the Marquis now went to such length, that he had made up his mind to comply with his brother's wishes, and withdraw into Provence.

" Doubt not that my first and strongest inclination was to quit this Paris, where time is swallowed like so much fog, without turning it to account or even perceiving it, and leave everything there to go to you. But, to pretend to rest, is to build in the air. Moreover, as a man of sense should fear sudden resolutions, I thought that, being unable to bring Honoré, I should be leaving him in the streets; and I was content to search for no other reason, although my taste for fondling him is by no means extreme, notwithstanding I am continually stimulated to do so by that little witch Du Saillant†."

A short time after Mirabeau returned to his father's house, he accompanied the Marquis to the estate of Bignon, where the latter always spent some time every year. Here they remained together eight months. During this interval there are few facts worthy of

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 26th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 29th 1781.

recording; but we must not omit to mention a family fête, of which we have an exact account written by Mirabeau, who composed, for the occasion, both the words and music of an interlude, a work deserving of praise only with reference to the intention *.

We could likewise give the particulars of a project of his, dictated by filial respect, to consecrate, by a rustic monument, the recollection of his father's philanthropic works. As this project is mentioned in all its

* Besides this interlude, we have a number of pieces of poetry written by Mirabeau, who however candidly says: "The truth is, I have never written any poetry worth notice."—*Original Letters from Vincennes.* Vol ii. p. 423. Nothing that we possess disproves this assertion. The Marquis of Mirabeau had a taste for poetry, and applied himself to it more than his son did. At an early age, being carried away by the natural confidence of youth, he tried his unfledged pinions in a didactic poem, which he soon after abandoned.

"I have written the 'Battle of Cassano,' [in which his father was so dangerously wounded] as an episode in the first canto, of 'The Art of War,' a poem composed by me at a period when poetry was my trade, and the only one I was allowed to follow."—*Domestic Memoirs of the Marquis of Mirabeau.*

He however continued to write poetry all his life, but his subjects were of mere temporary interest. We have, for instance, a tolerably good imitation, written by him, of Catullus's epithalamium of Thetis and Peleus, which imitation was composed on the occasion of the marriage of the Count of Gisors and Madlle. de Nivernois. We are of opinion that a more assiduous cultivation of poetry would have rendered the Marquis of Mirabeau a poet of no mean order, and the reader will not be surprised at this assertion, when the present work has enabled him to appreciate the Marquis's writings, hitherto quite unknown, which are remarkable for an abundance, a boldness, and an energy of metaphor often worthy of the most lofty poetical language.

particulars by Peuchet * and Vitry †, we shall not enter into the subject, because we wish to confine ourselves to facts that are really interesting and characteristic ‡.

Mirabeau, though restored to his family, had still long and severe trials to undergo; and the reader may form some notion of them from the correspondence published in 1806 §, with more zeal than judgment, by I. F. Vitry, a friend of Mirabeau's—a correspondence real and authentic, but garbled. We possess the originals of these letters, the unpublished portion of which, together with the remainder of our materials also unpublished, will serve us to continue our portrait of Mirabeau, painting him with his own colours as well as with those supplied by persons who had the best opportunities of observing and knowing him well.

Reasons which we shall explain further on, now

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* Vol. ii. pp. 9, 13, 14, 15, *et seq.*

† Unpublished letters, &c., pp. 16, 32, 43.

‡ A few days after his arrival at Bignon, Mirabeau, as he was shooting, was rather badly wounded by the awkwardness of a servant. A letter written to Vitry, dated September 9th 1781, makes us acquainted with this accident. This is what Mirabeau says of it.

"Like another Louis XIV, I threw my gun upon the ground, for fear I should regale him with the contents. The poor devil, who is much attached to me, is sufficiently punished for his thoughtlessness, by the fear he experienced when he saw my blood flow."

This servant, on the 2nd of April 1791, was still in Mirabeau's service, and his master left him, by his will, 8000 francs.

§ One volume 8vo, Paris, Le Normand, 1806.

induced the Marquis of Mirabeau to make a favourable impression upon the Bailli with regard to his nephew.

" Give no credence to the reports which people are pleased to spread against him; believe nothing but what I tell you, for I know that ill-natured things have already been said. There are individuals interested in destroying him *, and they would fain make the wolf so monstrous, that his ears are camels' tails. But I will let you know every thing: this is doing justice, and it is also my duty. Though he so greatly resembles his mother, he has not her tormenting spirit, nor her domestic violence and turbulence; though an immoderate talker, he detests scandal; neither has he a vulgar appearance, nor is he given to intemperance; he has no taste for play, which he abhors, as he also does idleness, being fond of work and books. As a set-off against these good qualities, he is always out at the elbows, and there is innate want of order in him; he is credulous as a nurse, indiscreet, a liar by exaggeration, affirmation, and impudence, without necessity, for the mere sake of story-telling; and he has a confidence in himself which on every subject throws dust into the eyes of others, setting it off, as he does, with infinite talent and powers of mind †. However, vice

* The collateral branch of the Countess of Mirabeau's family.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 26th 1781.

in him has taken much less root than virtue. He is all facility, fire, incapacity, weakness (not laziness), uncertainty of disposition, a mind cogitating in the indefinite, and building with soap bubbles *. Now, brother of mine, we have him as he is. I pass over myself, for if I had you not, I should be but a poor, prostrate old man. Whilst we yet last, we must assist him, if he shows constant good-will, rather than suffer him to dangle from some tree that may find him heavy †.

"I have yet no reason to draw back. Honoré appears wholly occupied in playing the tame duck, and saving me trouble. It is very strange! Disposed as he is to decide dogmatically upon all matters, and to stun every one with his knowledge, he confesses that he is nothing compared to his father. The truth is, that it is difficult to have greater talent than he has for acceleration and deduction ‡."

The Bailli, a very enlightened man, from the observations which a long and meditative practical philosophy § had enabled him to make, drew a natural conclusion from these particulars.

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 22nd 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 13th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 16th 1781.

§ This philosophy may be detected in the original sallies con-

" So, thanks to your posteromania, you are now engaged in playing the pedagogue over a chicken of

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tained in two letters, one written about this period, the other ten years previously.

" I have only a carcass naturally strong, but which I have so often risked upon a toss up of heads or tails, that it is beginning to decay. I have now dreamed away two-thirds of the dream of life; and, with the exception of mass, which I have not yet performed, I have done a little of every thing; and have at length perceived, like the late Mr. Solomon, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. With regard to the latter, I have always felt, and still feel it, for you and yours; but I have kept scarcely any for my own use,—I who laughed as dexterously at the bows made to me when governor of Guadeloupe, and to my Excellency the Captain-general of the fleets and squadrons of St. John of Jerusalem, as at those which I returned to keep the persons company who made them to me, and also at those which I saw made by the great of the earth, all of whose greatness was not in their hearts and heads."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd* 1781.

" Believe me, John Anthony saw sufficient, and lived long enough in your infamous Sodom, to have acquired the experience of a Parisian. Then John Anthony has carried his long person, and his face sometimes grave, sometimes humourous, often silly, into the four quarters of the world. He has looked everywhere; as the Italian hath it, ' *Tutto il mondo è casa nostra.* Further, John Anthony, formerly with light hair, then chesinut, and lastly gray, and formerly in pecuniary difficulties, got into easy circumstances. Thus, John Anthony, who sat upon the judgment seat, embroidered with fleurs-de-lys,—who governed, obeyed, commanded, did battle by land and by sea, was the chief of one senate, and member of another, would ultimately, if he had not rendered his outward man of a tolerably irregular form, and become lame, have entered holy orders, in order to say mass, and thus exclaim with Solomon, that he had seen every thing, and that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Is not this a fine period?"—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February* 15*th* 1771.

thirty-two years old! Are you silly enough to believe that you will make him other than he is *? You have undertaken a puzzling task, in endeavouring to round off a disposition which is like a hedge-hog, all in points, with very little body †. Take heed, moreover, that the very way to succeed in nothing is to attempt to think for others, and lead them according to your taste, and not theirs ‡. If, when your son is thirty-three years old, you cannot let him take his own range, after the punishments he has undergone, you are attempting to dry up the river after the fashion of the Danaides §."

These sarcasms were not left without a reply.

"I admit that this man, who has an ardent and perspicuous mind, and is almost unequalled in talent, but made up of wadding as regards his disposition, has no judgment, and that his heart, which is good, is attached to nothing. And I hold that, in lieu of a soul, he has only a mirror, in which all is reflected and immediately effaced, for nothing is realised. You will say that this is a pleading to justify my new

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 6th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July June 13th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 3rd 1781.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 4th 1781.

mode of enacting the schoolmaster with an adult. But he is no more thirty-three than I am sixty-six; and it is not more rare to see a man of my age, although grown grey by disappointment, tire out both the legs and the heads of young men, by eight hours of walking, or the same period of closet work, than to see a bloated tun of a fellow, pock-marked, and with an old look, say *papa*, and not know how to behave. You are too equitable not to admit that a son cannot be amputated like an arm: if this could be done, I should long since have strutted about with one arm; but as it cannot, when my son comes to me, I am not free to cast him into the street,—when he listens, I am bound, in honour and conscience, to talk to him with a view of making him, from a good swimmer that he is, become a diver—when he behaves well and obeys, it is my duty to lead him—if he is in debt, the aim of my conduct should be to free him therefrom; and if he has a wife, to lead him to her, and make him win back her regard by inducing her to bite at his hook, as she did on a former occasion. All this is not matter of choice and will, but of duty *."

The marquis continued to give a favourable account of his son, whom he judged in his own way.

" First, set down as a fact that this man is nothing,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 21st 1781.

absolutely nothing. He has the devil's own wit, but it is always placed like the eyes of a hare. He has taste, quackery, and the appearance of knowledge; he has action, turbulence, and daring; he is a bird that teaches others to sing, and sometimes evinces dignity; finally, he is neither harsh nor overbearing in command. Now, all this serves only to show him as forgetful of the day before, and careless of the morrow, —as yielding to the impulses of the moment. He is a child-parrot, an abortive man, acquainted with neither the possible nor the impossible, with neither uneasiness nor convenience, pleasure nor pain, action nor repose— and who yields the moment things resist*. I have scarcely any further occasion to quarrel with him about the lies which at one time constituted the liver and the spleen, and the unconquerable temperament of his body. He sometimes draws up suddenly when in full speed towards exaggeration. He is likewise sick of his scattered knowledge, which has become tiresome to him ever since he has pursued something more positive. I do not let drop a word but he picks it up and brings it to me again; in short, he is a magpie and a jay by instinct†. Nevertheless, I doubt his escaping from me, and I think he may be made an

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 5th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 17th 1781.

excellent tool if he is taken hold of by the handle of vanity. I should think it certain also, that he would not escape from you either, provided you never scolded him, for he is a timid child—but attacked him through his self-love, telling him to his face very strong truths, but in the form of ratiocination *. The more I see of him the more I have reason to repeat that he is a good sort of fellow, who sticks to every thing, and will always be a little crack-brained, but for whom any narrow sphere will suffice, provided it does not widen †.

" I do not spare him my morning ratiocinations upon his follies, either in tone or argument, of the day before. He seizes my well-supported moral, and my lessons, which have always a living interest, because they revolve upon a real pivot, that of knowing, no doubt, that a man does not change his nature, but that his reason serves to conceal his weak side, and to guard it well, so that he may avoid being boarded on that side ‡.

" I must tell you that Honoré visibly improves. I may say, that when I took him in hand, he was madder

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 17th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 30th 1781.

than in former times. People shudder at the thoughts of my taking him with me, especially as my children remain behind *. When I look before me, I see perhaps, as far as any body else; and yet, notwithstanding his horrible ugliness, his irregular gait, his peremptory precipitation, his swollen and bloated person, and his atrocious look, or rather frown, when he listens and reflects, something tells me that he is not more dangerous than a stuffed image to frighten away birds; that the sternness with which he has contrived to surround his person, his reputation, and his mighty deeds, is nothing but smoke; and that, at bottom, there is no man in the kingdom less capable than himself of committing a premeditated act of wickedness †."

These explanations, however, did not convince the Bailli; he had long since been put upon his guard by the author of them, whose altered tone was not calculated to convert him very suddenly.

" I confess to you that the portraits of him which you now paint, are far from satisfactory to me; for, to tell you the truth, he was to have come to you from Vincennes quite corrected by reflection, and you describe him to me in reality, as a person who, feeling

* M. and Madame du Saillant were then on their estate in Limousin.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1781.

that he requires your assistance to seat him in his saddle, submits to all that he thinks agreeable to you *. I know, moreover (for at my age one has half of the devil's advantages for becoming a conjuror), that men of a certain stamp are able for a time to display the tiger's paw without claws; and he himself, when he was at Mirabeau with me, was like a handsome girl if I but frowned. But my nerves are not covered with velvet, like yours, and I am no longer of an age or taste to take the impossible by the collar, at the cost of my quiet—perhaps of my life—and the less so, because I have never any chance, nothing in my favour having ever succeeded,—for during my life I have encountered only agitations and hurricanes †. I have no desire therefore to tempt the devil, who has always meddled with my concerns ever since I was born, and will probably continue to do so whilst I remain in this world, on condition, I trust, that he shall not meddle with them in the next, in which I firmly believe ‡; for I have persisted in fixing the immortality of the soul in my head, in spite of the enormous quantity of vegetables which I have seen in carriages at Paris and in other great cities §."

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 15th 1781

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 10th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 15th 1781.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 21st, 1769.

The Marquis continued to write his remarks, from which we are not sparing of our extracts, because they are expressed in a very original manner, and because, among numerous errors of prevention and of system, the letters now before us contain many very just and truly characteristic observations.

"I often return to this man; but it is for our advantage that I should do so, as he is the successor destined to transmit our ancestors to future ages. This man has nothing in the world belonging to himself but a will, which is incredible in one displaying so much talent, taste, intellect, and facility whenever he takes pen in hand. He has not a single idea of his own. Like the Malabars, he is very ingenious in invention, but quite a nullity in ideas. All with him is either borrowed or a reminiscence, which he makes his thing and his flesh. In this he would be like us all, who never had innate ideas, if he had any body; but he is a mere shadow. This distinction, which experience has at length made me discover, explains to me a multitude of things and effects. The world is full of mere shadows which take each other for real bodies; but no shadow was ever so much of a shadow as this one. He has no passion; he is voracious and unequal, but is neither a glutton nor at all fond of wine. As for women, faith it was pure exuberance and talk. Being hideously ugly, at this trade impudence and boldness are sure weapons, and these are the ones he used. As for being difficult to live with,

and possessing that backbiting, uneasy and hostile temper imputed to him, he is at bottom gay, easy, good-natured, and affable, but neither tender, nor gallant, nor effeminate, nor voluptuous*."

"I can only confirm what I have said to you for some time past concerning Honoré. That head of his will always be a child's head—it is so by nature; and as he naturally puts himself at his ease, his having a Mentor does not at all weigh upon him. Besides, his is a head of execution and resource; he is also the best creature in the world except when in bad company, from which may God preserve him; and races have been begotten by ten thousand weaker and madder, and not provided with near so much intellect and good will†. Honoré will doubtless never be cured of his radical vices, his heat of blood joined to a facility that becomes a weakness, and to a natural and short-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 16th, 1781. It appears to us piquant to place by the side of this portrait, or rather caricature, what Mirabeau said of himself three months after.

"Gentle reader! you who, without being either Valdabon or Mirabeau, take an interest in the latter, because bars, bolts and locks are affecting prefaces, and because he appears to you more gay than mischievous, more mischievous than wicked, an impatient, fiery and irascible animal, but tender, affectionate, and an excellent man at bottom, do not you stamp with your feet," &c. *Second case for counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier.* 8vo. Edition, p. 141.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 21st, 1781.

sighted presumption which mistakes a bog for solid ground. This, and he admits it, makes of him a man who will long require an easy and friendly guide, and an agent in experience, in order to ripen his mind. Both come at the pace of a tortoise; but he has much talent and good will, and is well cut out for work *."

" I cannot say any thing but good of his arrangements and conduct, and of the surprising alteration which a residence of seven or eight months with me has produced in his conduct and ideas, without changing his natural manner, or generating affectation. He acknowledges, and with good reason, that the intellect and talent he employed in committing his follies are surprising; he admits this like all the rest, for he is the greatest confessor of faults in the universe, with this difference, that it is not like the inmates of Bicêtre, with a tone of compunction, but with an air of reflection like that with which the Bishop of Grenoble spoke of the Abbé le Camus †. It is impossible to possess greater intelligence and facility. With every attribute, or nearly so, of the sky-rocket, he is a thunderbolt of labour and expedition. Example,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 9th, 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 7th, 1782. Stephen le Camus, Bishop of Grenoble, afterwards Cardinal, who by a long penance, a public confession, austerities, and the practice of great virtues, atoned for some juvenile errors. He was born in 1632, and died in 1707.

knowledge, and superiority correct him of themselves; but he has an immense want of being governed—and he feels it too. He knows that he owes his return to you; he knows that you have always been pilot and compass to me, and that you must be the same to him—and he puts his vanity in his uncle *."

"I tell you he is a rare subject for the future. You have all the Saturn necessary for his Mercury. But if once you hold him, do not let him go:—should he even perform miracles, keep you hold of him, and pull him by the sleeve—for the poor devil requires it. If you act as a father to him, he will satisfy you; but if you act only as an uncle, he is a lost man†. Love this young man thus *unbrambled* against hope. You are *omni spes et fortuna nostri nominis*, as Hannibal said to his brother. Probe his heart, and raise his head. Let him know that under your long and cold features dwells the best man that ever lived—one made of the filings of angels. Make him love you, and he will become a great man; it is you who will strike him with the thunder of St. Paul ‡."

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd, 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 5th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 28th 1782.

At this period Mirabeau was deeply afflicted at the loss of his very dear friend, Boucher, the "good angel" of the donjon of Vincennes. Peuchet, a biographer, who from an inexplicable caprice, constantly accuses Mirabeau without the least cause, after having just before excused him without reason, and sometimes praised him injudiciously, inveighs bitterly against the pretended ingratitude which the liberated prisoner evinced towards the man who had consoled and served him during his captivity.

"The reader," says he *, "*will not learn without anger*, that from the very period of Mirabeau's return to society, he spoke of M. Boucher *almost with contempt*—of that M. Boucher who dried his tears, procured consolation for Sophie, and endangered his responsibility to serve them both—of that man, in short, whom both he and Sophie surnamed *the good angel*, in consequence of the good he did them."

Let us now examine how Peuchet founds this imputation, with reference to the friend whose praises by Mirabeau the reader has already seen.

As poor after his deliverance as before, because the allowance made him by his father was an absolute mockery, Mirabeau was obliged to dispose of his manuscripts to raise money for his most pressing wants †. Unable by Boucher's means to dispose of

* Vol. ii. p. 7.

† He had long anticipated the state of pecuniary distress in

some of them, he wrote to Vitry in the following terms, if we are to believe Peuchet.

"Boucher is finessing with you, but his office has given him a habit of doing this. You, from natural disposition and rectitude of mind, pursue a straight line, which, in matters of business, as in geometry, is the shortest; and by so doing, you would put out a great many others."—*Letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated June 28th* 1781.

This then is the passage transcribed by Peuchet, in support of his accusation; but to give it greater force, in his inexplicable bitterness, he suppresses one part of the sentence, containing these words: "Boucher is a good and honest man;" for we have the original letter before us, and it may also be found in Vitry's book *. Why, then, did Peuchet garble this extract? For no other purpose than to give himself the satis-

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which his father always kept him. Two years previously he spoke of it in the following terms:—

"I entreat you, my dear angel, not to neglect my views on your bookseller, from thinking my difficulties at an end. My captivity is about to terminate, it is true, but not my distress. I expect that my father will show the most extreme parsimony. Now Sophie is in want, and in debt? Where shall we find means to meet these things if I do not work."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 28th* 1780.

We confine ourselves to the above extract, as we purpose explaining, in another place, the steps which Mirabeau assiduously took to avoid the pecuniary difficulties which he anticipated.

* Page 4, lines 1 and 2.

faction of asserting that Mirabeau spoke of his benefactor "in cold and contemptuous language *."

Nothing more is necessary to enable the reader fully to appreciate, on this new occasion, the impartiality shown by Peuchet, than a sentence written by Mirabeau to a third person, concerning an insignificant difficulty in mere form raised by Boucher, whose prudence often, a little too minute, excited at times Mirabeau's natural hastiness of temper. But what could reasonably be inferred from this trifling circumstance against Mirabeau's attachment to Boucher? We may fairly judge of this attachment by passages already quoted, as well as by the following affecting declaration, and the extracts which succeed.

"You said something the other day to Fontelliau that surprises me. Can you really believe that I am angry with you, from whom I have received nothing but services and acts of kindness? My excellent friend!—were you to inflict a death-wound upon me, I would yet try to embrace you before I died; and

* If, while blaming the bad faith of Peuchet, the reader should, however, think that there is any coldness in Mirabeau's letter, let him bear in mind, that the man to whom it was written, and of whose assistance Mirabeau stood then greatly in need, had had a quarrel with Boucher. Here is a proof it:—

"At bottom, Boucher, as you know, is too good and too well bred to have intended to affront you. His mind has been excited and confused by the chattering of women—that is all."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated July* 11*th* 1781.

my last words should be those of affection and gratitude *."

"I bless my fate, cruel as it was for so long a period, that it has given me such a friend as you, whom I do not find that I have paid too dearly for by my shipwreck †."

"I am thunderstruck at hearing of poor Boucher's death. You are, no doubt, aware of this deplorable event. Oh! my dear sister, what a destiny for a man so virtuous and so noble, in a condition of life so much beneath him! Obtain information respecting the fate of his family. Entreat my father to attend to their wants. Were I free, I would hasten to mingle my tears with those of his widow. Had I any thing of my own I would lay it all at her feet ‡."

Having stopped our narrative for a moment to discuss this episodic question, which appeared of sufficient interest to justify the notice we have taken of it, we return to the letters of the Marquis of Mirabeau.

"I can answer for the good will, and more than

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 8th 1779.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 10th 1780.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 3rd 1782. Mirabeau was then a prisoner, having, on the 12th of February previous, given himself up at the gaol of Pontarlier, in order to appeal from the judgment passed on him in his absence. He was not liberated till the 14th of August following.

good will, of your nephew, who, nevertheless, is a chicken that will never have any head; a merry-andrew, who proceeds along sometimes by sliding, sometimes by jumps, and a plunderer, who will never show good faith—these three things are in his nature. His erudition consists of stolen passages from journals, and affirmation. He thinks he knows all languages, whilst he is a mere grammaticaster in his own. In a word, he knows nothing, and can do nothing as the handle of a tool, but all as the tool itself; for when he has stolen a thought from you, he has so much confidence and audacity, that he will immediately sound it forth in rounded periods, were the thought even the smallest possible—this is mere instinct—but then he makes it succeed, and executes it. He has not even our memory. I have told him all this; but even with such drawbacks, he will delight you at times by the truth and power of his arguments *. With this, again—for all in him is contrast, though he is often but a poplar leaf—I know of no man more a master than he is on certain occasions. Reconcile this. I have told him a hundred times that he was no better than a coloured shadow. I hold the same opinion of many others, but of none so strongly as of him. He is not ill-tempered nor evil-disposed—on the contrary, he is a good kind of creature; but what brains!—if

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 6th 1782.

brains they be,—they are the weakest in Europe *. Thus, brother of mine, if this disjointed being can ever be sewn together again, it can be done only by you; and as he is to be cut out afresh, I cannot get a better pattern to do it by than yourself. Moreover, he is neither a father, nor an uncle, and he will respect you more than he does any body else. You must be kind and firm with him; you will thereby become his saviour, and make him your masterpiece of workmanship; and the more so, because he greatly loves good at present, and will plunder you of your principles and your virtue, for he has an infinity of wit, which is sharp as the sting of a hornet, God knows! He will even amuse you; but cut him short when he is bouncing—tell him that *notice*, *certainty*, and *truth* have never formed a trinity, and that you love nothing but truth †."

We here perceive a father, long irritated against his son, speaking of him with some affection, praising for the first time certain points of his character, announcing his coming regeneration, and founding his hope of it not only upon his paternal care, but upon the inspiration and advice of an uncle, whose family pride it was necessary to rouse, as well as his self-love. In manœuvring

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 17th 1781.

thus, the Marquis, more skilful than sincere, had a motive, which we will explain.

Mirabeau's return to his family, after an absence, or rather an exile, of ten years' duration, gave him, not the social condition which he had so long lost, but the means of recovering it. This, however, he could not effect until he had brought to a termination — a successful one, if possible—two matters equally delicate and difficult. One was to obtain a revision of the sentence pronounced against him at Pontaflier during his absence, and the other, to induce the Countess of Mirabeau to return to him. This lady had lived in separation from him ever since 1775; but in 1779 she obtained a judicial separation of property, and returned to the house of her father, the Marquis of Marignane. On the first appearance of her husband after his release from prison, she declared that she would sue for a judicial separation from bed and board.

To complete Mirabeau's regeneration, it was necessary that these two points should be settled. But as both could not be brought about at the same time, it was necessary to pursue one first in preference to the other. The choice was a matter of great embarrassment.

The principal object of the family was, as we have already stated, to perpetuate the name; hence, the Marquis was anxious that the reconciliation between the husband and wife should be brought about before the sentence was appealed from by the former.

"Seeing and foreseeing the length of the criminal proceedings, I often feel a wish to direct Honoré towards the reconciliation, as being an object he can attain, and which would lead him to the other, and thereby begin his new existence. But the devil himself could not persuade him; and as he gets warm in favour of the mad woman, whom he will not leave under the terror of such a sentence, and as he reasons extremely well when he pleases, I must needs give up the point *."

It was, however, well known that the greatest of difficulties would arise in the matter of the reconciliation, from the inveterate hatred borne by the Marquis of Marignane to his son-in-law, and from the indifference of the Countess, who was entirely governed by her father. Besides, the Countess of Mirabeau, who was living in a house of opulence, and in a species of widowhood, enjoying a life of pleasure, and being the queen and idol of the most brilliant society, and spending her life amid fêtes, balls, concerts, and olympic dramas, of which her remarkable talents had given the first idea, and formed the principal ornament—had a natural dread of a conjugal life, passed in dependence and poverty, in an isolated castle situated in a wild country.

The Mirabeau family calculated that these difficul-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 10th 1781.

ties, already so formidable, would be insurmountable if Mirabeau appeared to claim his wife before the sentence pronounced at Pontarlier was quashed. It was natural to suppose that the Marignane family would reproach him with his past errors, the publicity of his *liaisons*, and his flight with Madame de Monnier; and lastly, that his condemnation to the capital punishment carried with it the loss of his civil rights.

Though these reasons were so conclusive, the family long hesitated as to which attempt was to obtain precedence of the other.

The question was debated principally by the Marquis of Mirabeau and the Bailli; first, because the former concealed nothing from his brother; and next, because, whatever period was fixed for attempting to bring the husband and wife together, the Bailli must of necessity take a share in it, for he resided in Provence, and had kept up a certain intercourse with the Marignane family; and it could be only through him, and at his house, that Mirabeau could possibly prepare for and pursue the undertaking.

It was therefore to dispose the Bailli favourably towards lending his assistance in this matter that the Marquis wrote to him in the manner we have stated. But, attached as the Bailli was to his elder brother, to his house, and to his love of posterity, the thought of which he rejected from sheer weariness and from fear of difficulties to be overcome, he was, nevertheless, so

strongly prejudiced against his nephew, from the accounts of him which he had received from the Marquis during the last fifteen years, that he constantly refused to undertake the guardianship and mediation which Mirabeau's arrival at his house would necessarily impose upon him.

Long prior to this period he had written the following sentence, upon which the whole of his life was a most admirable commentary.

" I am nothing of myself; you are the chief of the family; you have issue, and are still alive; I am bound to you alone, and to yours through you. In one word, I am only the shirt, and you are the skin*."

The reader will now see him threatening to abandon the family interest which he had so long defended with indefatigable zeal, and shrinking from an undertaking that alarmed him.

" You are now writing romances upon domestic order, just as you formerly wrote them upon social order. I have no talent for composing romances. Honoré is the worst of those minds put out of shape by the mould in which they are cast. If, at thirty-two years of age he requires to be ridden with a curb rein, his understanding will never ripen, and we shall be both destroyed by your persevering in your own

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 27th 1776.

notions, which have occasioned all the misfortunes that have befallen you. These are numberless, because Providence has blown upon your plans and projects, and in the eyes of Providence, all that man performs is mere castle-building with cards *. If Honoré is not fit to be brought into the world, at his age,—if he is not sufficiently master of himself to avoid running his head against a post, it is madness to attempt making anything of him, but more than madness to endeavour to make him the father of a family. In such a case you must send him, as his good wife said, to the *Insurgents*, to have his head broken, or else to acquire a new disposition †. 'But,' say you, 'we have no children.' This is a very trifling misfortune. Our race has had its day: it is now extinct, and what

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 8th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 11th 1782. This very expression had been used by the Countess of Mirabeau, when the Bailli spoke to her about joining her husband after his release from the Donjon of Vincennes.

"She replied, that she had always desired his happiness, but could herself do nothing towards it; that he must do something to make amends for the past, such as going 'to the Insurgents,' and acquiring fame. I soon saw that the parrot had been taught its lesson; but I experienced a fit of indignation, which I had, however, strength to conceal."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 31st* 1781.

We need scarcely add that "going to the Insurgents" signified becoming one of the defenders of the new-born republic of the United States of America.

matters it? Those of Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and many others, have been swept from the earth, and yet the world goes on equally well. In this world we must either lose or leave all, an alternative which ought always to be with us on our pillow. What is the loss of a name—and what is even a name in the present times? Nevertheless I see that the disease of *posteromania* has grasped you by the throat, although you ought to consider that Cyrus and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus would have been fortunate had they not given birth to Cambyses and Commodus*. 'But,' you will again exclaim, 'why then have we worked so much in imitation of our forefathers?' to which I reply in your own words; for as you are always led away, head and heart, by the impulse of the moment, you are very subject to contradict yourself.

"Now, this is what you wrote to me three years ago, when you wished to keep your son in prison, where he had well earned his place.

"'What matters it whether our children, before they consummated our ruin and their own, had shown all the signs of that depredating evaporation peculiar to the present age? And what should we have done if they had? And what could we have done? And wherefore? What matters it, at bottom, who enjoys

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 10th 1782.

these things after us? Does it become a Christian, that is to say, a man improved, seconded, directed, and supported in the true and quiet path of mankind, to run after the flying and rapid spark of human life?—to attach himself to the duration of his works upon earth?—to trouble himself about what will become of them after he is gone? If it is from love of knowledge that we have laboured, and sown here, we shall reap elsewhere; if it is to attract, we have already reaped the reward. We must not act from whim and vain-glory. Such frail motives have nothing to rest upon: and whoever finishes must expect that his son will demolish, or exaggerate, or desert—for such is man's nature. He may build, but wisdom and virtue alone can preserve; and whether we have children, or whether we have none, as we have enjoyed that which others have planted and built, so others in their turn will enjoy what we plant and build. Whoever they may be, our task is done; and being placed in this world, like the silk-worm, to bustle about until we have spun our cocoon to leave it soon after, let us not attempt to see further than the said worm. The other world is sufficient to occupy our attention, and through it only must we look at the future.'

"Thus, therefore, I conform to your own philosophy, although you have been pleased to change it; and I am more and more convinced that my posterity, which cannot but be your own, is of no greater import-

ance to me than a turnip *. I perceive by the natural progress of all things that high nobility must descend, which is worse than ceasing to exist. It has henceforth nothing but humiliation to undergo, and it is losing itself each day more and more, in the gulf of depredations †. The rabble take everywhere. Behold, to cure you of your name, the ignoble equilibrium which—until the general overturn that will speedily take place, and the volcanic eruption that will rid us of thirty strata of petrifying alluvion—is established and must be maintained in Europe by the inkstands which have at their command, gunpowder, printing, impiety and sedition ‡. Nations will never more return

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 2nd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 17th 1782.

‡ Long before this period, the Bailli had often made similar remarks, and uttered similar prophecies. As we have not space to insert all that he wrote on the subject, we transcribe only one extract remarkable by its justness of perception and power of language.

"I know Paris: be assured that the vile populace which crouches there or goes thither to crouch, in search of fortune, as if fortune was a lost whelp, is as corrupt as Rome when she endeavoured to destroy the patricians even to their very name. Depend upon it that this infamous population of upstarts who take the lead among the magistracy, or in the finance, is a true republican population by its insolence, at the same time that on account of its vices without any redeeming virtue, it is unworthy of being republican. When a people in delirium make an attack upon a monarchy, they always begin with religion. This soon puts an end to prestiges, and the difference which God himself has made between u by distinctions

to strong moral feelings. I ask you whether such being the case, the nobles will have a very gratifying part to play in future?—and whether it is pleasant to have children to see them hooted, if they are good, and reduced to become nothing but parasites and hangers-on at Court, where each purchases his authority and pays for it in dependence—the subaltern from the chief, the chief from the sovereign, the sovereign from etiquette*.

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"I perceive that nobility is divided, and running to its ruin. It extends to the children of those blood-suckers, of those financial robbers introduced by the Pompadour, who herself sprang from this corruption †. Another part is connected with the quill-driving rab-

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the first traces of which we find in the Jewish law, appears unjust to this people. It therefore undermines the nobility; and the chief of the social hierarchy, deprived of the natural supporters of his throne, feels that it totters, and he vacillates upon his sacred seat. Think you that there is any remedy? I believe there is, and I will tell you my reason for so believing. The distinction between the nobles and the plebeians is only moral and conventional; and if this distinction is once destroyed, the nobles are reduced to vain pretensions which render them worse than useless."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 30th 1759.*

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 18th 1763.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 26th 1781.

ble, who change into ink the blood of the King's subjects *. A third is perishing smothered by vile robes, and by ignoble atoms of the dust of the closet, drawn from the mire by the purchase of an office †. And what is worse, nobility is obliged to bend the knee before mushrooms that have sprung up in a single night—also before pumpkins which, thanks to the weakness of the government, rise on end upon their native beds of manure, and form an aristocracy of churlish blood which takes a dastardly pleasure in showing its authority to its former masters ‡. It is not worth the trouble to continue a race for this, or to witness a revolution which the entire destruction of all the springs of state, will necessarily produce §. I confess then that I, who am not the cause of your faggots turning out to be mere straw, upon which the wind has blown—that I who understand nothing about this *bisogna compatire*—that I, who have no joinings, but am wholly of my race—have no notion of killing nor even of committing, myself, for the advantage of having a few grandnephews spick and span new. Assure him from me that from hence to Malta there

* Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 11th 1774.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 11th 1762.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 15th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 8th 1782.

is only one road with which I am well acquainted. Tell him that if he tells lies, or teases me *, I shall leave him to cool his heels by himself, and shall soon place a few hundred thousand millions of tons of salt water between us †.

* * * * * "Now, notwithstanding your statement and your letters, I tell you plainly that I give up all thoughts of taking charge of him. I know the ways of such gentlemen: they first of all do that which their noble imagination suggests, and then they ask leave to do it. Were I to take charge of him, I should, of a surety, commit myself. St. Francis of Sales pretends that we are not incommoded by elephants, the most bulky of all brutes, but by gnats which are very small. As you know your son much better than I do, and have absolute authority over him, why would you send him to me? What would you have me do with him? When you would lead an ass by another road than that which takes him to his usual drinking place, Tom Cudgel must threaten, and my lord's hand point out the way. What am I to your son ‡? Who will assure me that all his dregs have dripped from him? He does his best to please you; he is very taking, but these are strong reasons for not

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 1st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 27th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 20th 1782.

exposing me to become his dupe. Moreover, I know his morals, and to what tune he pipes;—it costs him nothing to lie and to promise, but I believe in his promises as much as I do in the devil's miracles *. Lastly, youth is always in the right when opposed to age. To associate with him does not suit me. I should be blamed, if I turned him out. Say as much as you like, that the castle is your own;—it is precisely because it is your own that it is his (and in consequence he has already pulled down and built up within its walls)—much more than it is mine, for it can never belong to me. And what would become of him if I turned him out of the castle, the only place in which he can live? I see no appearance of his wife going back to him; for he can gain her only through a triple file of collaterals; and if they were together, his father-in-law would never give him house-room (for this would be stitching together muslin and leather) and his wife would be obliged to come to Mirabeau †..... Hence I conclude that sending him to me is quite useless, to say the least; for he is neither the beginning, nor the end, nor the middle of a man, and I know no better than you how to form Cæsars from the school of the Laridons ‡.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 1st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 31st 1782.

‡ Unpubli d er m the same to the san 1782.

"You submit to what you consider your duty as a father. This is very right; for it behoves you to ascertain whether he will bear seed, or whether he is nothing but chaff. But I, thank God! am only an uncle, which neither gives me the right, nor imposes upon me the duty, of tutoring; and I do not think it fair that I should have the burthen upon my shoulders of this turbulent, proud, conceited, and insubordinate spirit, who succeeds but too well in gaining every day, foot by foot, some point or other, and making himself a despot. I know, moreover, that he is captivating—that he is the rising sun, and I well know how I shall be cheated and plundered *. Of what good, therefore, is his presence here? Can it be supposed that after fifty years of labour and tribulation I am desirous of embracing the worst labour of all, because you are pleased to say that I have 'quietude of heart, the reward of good men, that of the mind being prohibited to me by the entablature of my physical organs.' I tell you that I have obtained both, and will enjoy them. You have replied, you say, to my observations about the castle of Mirabeau. But this reply signifies nothing at all. Ought I to support the infliction of a fellow with such a devouring mind, when I did not beget him? It is singular you should say—'that is not even in the order of follies belonging to him?' Can follies be ranged in a circumscribed category?

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 5th 1782.

Is there any description of turbulent folly into which he has not fallen? How have I deserved from my family to be treated so harshly? Am I a burthen upon it *?"

These letters produced no effect upon the Marquis, who always persevered in his own notions, as we have already shown. The Bailli, roused to anger by his brother's perseverance, persuaded himself that the Marquis, stimulated by private suggestions, was anxious to rid himself of his son. Full of this notion, he now, for the first time, expressed the resentment he felt towards Madame de Pailly, whom we have already mentioned, although we have avoided saying much about her. He had long considered this lady the cause of most of the domestic misfortunes which he had witnessed in his brother's family; for he knew that she was the malignant and perfidious instigator of the extreme rigour formerly pursued by the Marquis, over whom she had assumed absolute sway. When Mirabeau returned to his father's house, she went to visit Switzerland, her native country. The Bailli's mistrust constantly pursued this mischief-making mistress, and he attributed to her absence his brother's change of language. He likewise imputed to her expected return, the entreaties, which daily became more pressing, for him to take charge of his nephew; and he was the more

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 3rd 1782.

irritated, on this account, at the attempt to impose upon him a disagreeable task which he was vainly endeavouring to shun. He was moreover, uneasy concerning the responsibility connected with a circumstance, of which he had an unfavourable opinion. Lastly, he had at length overcome a reserve unaccountable to his friends, who well knew his manly candour and rigid veracity, and which surprised even ourselves as we read our immense collection of his letters. For the first time, during a period of forty-one years, he expressed his feelings concerning the improper influence exercised by Madame de Pailly; and his accusations were fully borne out by the timid and even evasive answers of the haughty man, who, with the sole exception of the Bailli, allowed no one belonging to him to ask him an embarrassing question.

"Too many people meddle with your concerns. You may understand me if you will. Let all that appears to you obscure be examined by yourself, and not by the eyes of strangers especially female eyes. The more such eyes display wit and fascination, the more are they to be mistrusted, like those of a beauteous Circe by whom a spirit of domination and jealousy is insinuated, that deceives the greatest men*. You tell me, as an excuse for insisting upon sending me your son, and leaving him with me, provided he is joined by the

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 28th 1782.

grasshopper which has chirped all the summer*, that, at your house, St. Jealousy, as our mother used to say, would take up her abode between the two sisters-in-law, if she of Aix was with you. In support of this you adduce the past†. You mistake what was then said; you give to words a meaning which they never had, and you take away that which it was quite natural they should have; for somebody was determined that there should be no head-dresses in the house—even my hat displeased‡. Women can do nothing but plot, especially women of talent, who are the most dangerous species of animal. She in whom you place a too extensive confidence, is like all the others: she will be mistress; all who would oppose her sway, or share it with her, displease her and she hates them cordially. It is a general rule without exception, that a woman in her situation will govern absolutely, and she does so. I cannot now call to mind a thousand little things with regard to myself, for I cared not a rush about them; but that which did not affect me, a free individual, would greatly affect your children. She never liked either of them, though, it must be confessed that, with

* An allusion to the Countess of Mirabeau, who was a fine singer, and spent her time at private concerts and private dramatic lyrics.

† In 1774 Mesdames de Mirabeau and du Saillant had spent together several months, at Bignon.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 16th 1782.

the sole exception of Saillanette, none of them were very amiable. But with reference to Caroline* herself —our gentle and peaceful Caroline, the most soothing woman that ever lived, who has no eyes but for her father, her husband and her children, and who loves you so dearly, you would make a sad mistake if you thought the other liked her. Depend upon it that without mixing myself up too much with such matters, I see pretty nearly all, and I let things go on because I know that it is impossible to prevent a river from running†."

The Marquis betrayed no surprise at this unexpected attack but replied as follows.

"The Bailli John Anthony was not in good humour the other day. *Item*, if the grand cross was a safeguard against such sorts of parentheses, we should see more candidates for it. Be that as it may, our two hearts, formed to amalgamate with each other, laugh and embrace each other in the presence of our minds at times and by chance at variance. I must then enter into a matter which you have begun with a confidence that does me honour, and a delicacy that affects me.

"With my sixty-seven years over my head, spent in assiduously performing my duties towards my family

* Saillanette, Caroline, the former a soubriquet, the latter the Christian name of Madame du Saillant.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 29th 1781.

and society, so far as I have been able to make them out, I may admit that I have a female friend who has loaded me with benefits, and devoted herself to four generations of my family. Until my mother died, she served her; and as for me, her property, her care, her time, all has been mine. My horses and my furniture came from her hand, and always as and when I desired the same; and even against her own judgment and interest. The purchase of my hotel, for instance, would never have been her choice*. During the storms of my life, when all the world would have withdrawn from me, because I was considered prostrate—when the wreck of what I had left did not reach half way up my leg, and many deserted me, she hoisted the signal of constancy, and even braved, and subsequently forgave personal insult—she who is so apt to take offence. If my daughter is the wife of Du Saillant, and not a Benedictine nun, she owes it to her; for she was to have set out next day for Montargis†, if this able woman had not undertaken her case.

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* This is a piece of indirect flattery to the Bailli, who always blamed this purchase made against his advice, and which, to his great regret, settled the Marquis at Paris.

† Before Madame du Saillant was married, and when she was only sixteen, she had a childish fancy to become a nun, like her eldest sister, Mary-Ann Jane, born July 10th 1745, then a nun in the convent of the Ladies of St. Dominic, at Montargis, where she took the veil March 13th 1763. We find, on this subject, the following

" After this, my dear brother, would you suspect such a heart and such a head of petty jealousy in detail?—and would you esteem me so little—or, to speak more correctly, do you know me so ill as to believe that a person could gain my confidence by setting me by the ears with my children. Now, if I have ever evinced any good quality, it is that of getting rid of annoyances. Never was a man more surrounded and circumscribed by three ineffable generations of this description; but I have walked over them without notice, as I do over the mushrooms in my lawn. I must, however, say, that without this quality I should long since been a poor, isolated wretch, left alone to make speeches in the valley of Jehosaphat; and I have found myself so circumstanced, that weariness under my burthen would have been very excusable *."

The ice once broken, the Bailli did not hesitate to reply to his brother's insufficient justification.

" I now come to the point on which you say I have attacked you, and on which, saving your presence, you have the weakness of great men—a weakness you will never get over, because our passions harden with our

passage in a letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Duke of Nivernois, dated July 14th 1763:—

" It is my intention to withdraw from her convent, and keep near my mother, my second daughter; and the more so, because she makes a signal of vocation, and I feel a repugnance at making a sheepfold of nuns."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1781.

bones, instead of declining with our age. Let this be told you *en passant;* for people flatter you, and you flatter yourself. Now, my duty of administering to you the antidote, shall not yield to the fear of displeasing you by its bitterness.

"You confidently suppose that I am unable to refute any of the things which you state to be deserving of your gratitude. *Bene sit*—I have nothing to say upon this score. But were your reasons even stronger than you think them—and were it true, as you believe it is, that you owe much gratitude, it is not less true that, in my judgment, and in the opinion of all who take interest in the matter, she has certainly brought much evil upon you and yours, although perhaps innocently, and being herself blinded by certain objects. Nobody ever mentioned her to me, except with a sneer, and everybody thought that the jealousy of your adverse party * was well founded. You are far from having procreated angels; but had your children been angels, they never would have submitted, without vexation, to have been governed and scolded, in their father's house, by a stranger, even were she their step-mother: but as they are in reality children of headstrong tempers, this vexation appears prominently. Tell me not that she has always avoided speaking harshly to them, for if you believe this, you are under

* The Marchioness of Mirabeau, who during twelve years had been engaged in a law suit against her husband.

a great mistake. I was once obliged to interfere, and to tell her that young people did not like to be taken to task by those to whom they had not the honour of belonging*."

We must here find place for an extract in which the panegyrist himself of Madame du Pailli describes the sway she exercised over the Marquis's young family, who, as the Bailli very justly observed, must have found it hard to be borne.

"The black lady† would make the best and most useful duenna in the world, When I had my daughter‡ nearer home, I was obliged to promise the lady, that I would not see my child more than once a-year until she was married; that this should be only on one day, and that I should never write to her. With great difficulty did I obtain peace at this price; for she wishes all my children to belong to religious orders, and I was never less disposed to agree to such a thing§."

We return to the Bailli.

"I did not write the words 'fraudulent enemy',

* Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 15th 1781.

† Madame du Pailli, who had adopted the practice, which she never discontinued, of wearing black.

‡ Louisa, afterwards Madame de Cabris, then only twelve years of age. She was at first sent for education to a convent in Limousin, and afterwards removed to that of the Ladies of St. Dominic at Montargis.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Countess of Rochefort, dated August 7th 1764.

which you have used; but had I done so, I would not disavow the expression, for she is certainly the enemy of every one who has any share of your confidence; and had it been possible to destroy your affection for me, be assured she would have made the attempt. She treated me as a friend, because she did not dare to treat me otherwise. God forbid, however, that I should wish to deprive you of what is a consolation to you. I am willing to believe that the person in question is not so bad as she is supposed to be by those who have seen her conduct towards your children; but she is a woman, and likes to govern; and she mechanically follows her instinct *."

The Marquis replied as follows:—

"With due deference, you have just as good a claim to the title of commander-general of the squadrons of idle talkers, as of those of Malta. But, plague on it, I must answer you, and rip open this ticklish question. In the first place, I shall state that if I were a fourth person in the Trinity, it would be impossible for me to do better than the three others; and yet they have not satisfied the whole world. Now, it is probably not from the likings and the dislikings of my strange family that you would judge of my inclinations. Form your opinion from your own examination. I have certainly to thank you for the mark of esteem and true

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 28th 1781.

and noble affection that you give me by writing to me as you do. I know that the weakness of great men is the vice of little men, and I may have been mistaken when I thought that he who had the vice, had also the weakness (Henry IV. and Marshal Saxe were both in this predicament); but that he who had the weakness might possibly not have the vice (such was the case with Messrs. de Turenne and Bayard). I also thought that with such a weakness a man lived double time, and was consequently doubly worried; and that he who had it not was more isolated and more sad. Now, you know that nothing is true but what we believe to be so. However, it is more than useless to ratiocinate upon this point, because it is as much determined by nature, as to be born with light or dark hair.

"But that which I decidedly believe—and I have been confirmed in my belief by the science of life—is that this taste is a folly in fools, and a wise thing in a properly constituted mind. I may say with truth, my dear brother, that if I knew a man in the world who had a stronger desire to be good than I have, I really think I should call upon him and beg his receipt. This real desire, and the natural exertions always resulting from it, when it is real, has long existed in me. In this respect I have many physical constitutional defects to overcome, but none intellectual; and I can assure you that, at all times, if any person has influence on my mind, it is in proportion as that person appears

to me good, or to have been good,—for I have shown that I could impose silence upon weaknesses when they peeped forth. I do not say that a malicious person, even a servant, might not produce an effect upon me, even though I despised the tale-bearer; but my want of curiosity, quite singular in its way, has preserved me from such a snare. With this sole exception, no one ever obtained any real influence over my mind except through esteem.

" If, after this, you see blue when I see yellow, it is a point not to be argued, because assuredly the present case is not your own, or else all the rules would be wrong. I mean the rules of reciprocity, seeing the marked and particular esteem in which I have always held you, even to the preferring, at all times, of your character to my own. But, so far as I am myself concerned, I have my proofs. I cannot deny that there exists the greatest confidence or, if you will, the greatest infatuation. But it is precisely since this exists that I have done all for my children, even to despoiling myself. I settled them too early in life, with exertions and in a manner that no other parent would have attempted; these children therefore have no reason to complain of her influence over my mind.

" When, after this, on certain occasions, a person who has seen young people come into the world, and grow up under her eye in a house where she resided as an intimate friend, may have warned them with but little precaution, of what might displease their father,

whose feelings she well knew, it ill became them to be angry, even should she on such occasions display ill-humour for an instant *,

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" I have always perceived, or nearly so, the defects of those I love; and such defects are the only ones I can see clearly. But for the want of archangels, we must love imperfect creatures. A man need not have lived to my age to be convinced of this fact; for were it not so, he would take an aversion to himself. You are perfectly right in stating that gnats incommode more than elephants, and when we would describe a gnat by its venom, we magnify it into an elephant. I assure you, for instance, that the person we are speaking of, and at whom you have poured a broadside of sarcasms 'cutting and pointed at the tail,' as Montaigne terms them, has said to me perhaps more than five hundred times, during the long series of my inflictions, in which many mistakes and impositions have existed,

" ' Many honest people take a real interest in you; even the public would be indignant at such misfortunes, if you did not bear them. But you have here hearts truly yours, that of the good Bailli and mine †.'

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 30th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 24th 1781.

"The good Bailli!" replied the truth-telling and zealous uncle, "the good Bailli! By St. Polycarpus, Sir Marquis and very dear elder brother, to whom would you have my excellency talk idly, if it be not to yourself. The good Bailli, indeed! The person who uttered this is guilty of duplicity; the 'good Bailli' knows and has long seen it without saying a word. Even since 1750, he has perceived that this person disliked him, and had she thought it possible to deprive him of your affection, you would also have perceived her dislike. Since that period, I have seen a hundred times, that she regarded the two brothers* with the most implacable hatred, of which I had my share, as also had Saillanette and Du Saillant †. Believe what I say: when a woman, who is a stranger, introduces herself into a family, she raises up discord, and stirs up all the evil passions to which discord gives birth. However, let us say no more on the subject ‡."

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* Mirabeau, and his brother the Viscount.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 15th 1782.

Notwithstanding the resistance of the Marquis, we may infer from the following passage in a letter addressed by Mirabeau to his sister, that the Bailli's observations had produced some effect.

"Madame du Pailli has written to me to day almost a letter of apology, which, joined to the softened epistle I have received from my father, shows me very clearly that some of my uncle's shots have taken effect."

But the Marquis, heated by opposition to his will, chose to continue the discussion.

"Since," he wrote, "the volcano of John Anthony still smokes, and its lava has not left off running, let it suffice for me to beg you to believe, that I have never yet been, nor am now, nor perhaps shall be for a long time to come, an idiot. I was silly in carrying too far my notions of certain duties. I hope I shall be cured of this by rather harsh and often-repeated remedies; but in God's name, say nothing more about the pretended enemy. By God's cross, had she been his enemy, he would never have left Vincennes *! But for her he would have died in prison, for she obtained his release †."

"What a confession has escaped you!" was the Bailli's reply. "You pretend that she exercises no influence over you, and you admit, in the same breath, that if she had pleased, Honoré would still be at Vincennes. You have said more than you intended to say, or perhaps knew of your domestic influences. But I have always known beyond a doubt, that this woman has never ceased assiduously striving to sever your children from you, and you from them, and to separate

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 9th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 15th 1782.

you from all those who ought, by nature, to be near you *.

* * * * *

"Whatever reliance I may place upon a father, always speaking of his children, I must observe, because I know it to be a fact, that all the family, myself included, have a snake near you which hisses into your ear, things to their disadvantage; and, on my honour, you ought to beware of this reptile. You are aware that I am tardy in making assertions, and that I never do so but upon full conviction.

"I know well enough that your answer will be all about 'great obligations,' and so forth. The whole of your reply is in my head by anticipation; but your answer to one question is not there, and this question is—what business has a woman, a stranger to the family, to meddle with its concerns? Now, I have said all, and have done with the subject†."

The Marquis was now seriously offended.

"As, at all events," he replied, "you will have enough to do with Honoré's education without taking the additional burthen of mine, which you are following up with a veracity that does honour to us both, I do not render your judgment subservient to my own,

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 25th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 21st 1782.

but admit the truth of your imputations, and leave you to your convictions *."

The Bailli at length closed this contention in the following words—

"I perceive by this expression in your letter, 'You will have enough to do with Honoré's education without taking the additional burthen of mine,' that you are a little angry. I have stated what I thought, without any intention of working at your 'education,' and still less of offending you. But I have told you the truth, which almost always displeases. You have yourself written as follows—

" 'Woe to him who draws upon himself, not offensive truths, which must not be uttered, but offences on behalf of truth †.'"

Nothing, assuredly, can better show the particular feelings by which the Marquis and the Bailli were actuated, than this passing though warm altercation. It is the only quarrel between them which we can find in a collection of more than four thousand letters written in the course of fifty years, by the two brothers, always so tenderly united. The Bailli's remarks on the present occasion may be considered more important, because they were made spontaneously, and without

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 8th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 15th 1782.

his being acted upon by any influence whatever: for he was alone at Aix, where his nephew did not join him till long afterwards. We shall close this episode with a reflection which the reader has, perhaps, already anticipated.

Almost at the commencement of our task, we mentioned the injurious power usurped by Madame du Pailly in the Mirabeau family during almost half a century; we stated her absolute rule over the Marquis, the hatred she bore to his son, and her direct, continual, and always fatal influence over the fate of that son, whose errors and wanderings may be accounted for much better by false measures and irritating rigour, than by the passions which had germinated in a temperament morally and physically exuberant and fiery. Having advanced on this subject nothing but unsubstantiated assertions, it became our duty to prove them by evidence, especially as our mission is to contradict most of those who have preceded us as Mirabeau's biographers. This we could not do effectually, without proving all that we advance for that purpose. Besides, none of our predecessors have made any more than a vague, hearsay allusion to a fact, of which Mirabeau, in his letters from Vincennes*, says only a few words, but which forms his most conclusive justification; and with regard to his father, the most natural and decisive

* Vol. I. pp. 7, 194, 264; Vol. II. p. 283; unpublished letter to Vitry, p. 132.

explanation of the errors into which a master mind was dragged, by inhuman and unnatural measures.

This we trust will be received as our excuse, if, having mistaken the value, effect, and measure of our materials, we have extended our evidence to too great a length. We now take leave of this subject, to return to the appeal from the sentence of condemnation pronounced against Mirabeau, in his absence,—a period which we had reached when we were led to interrupt our narrative, and to anticipate, in the date of the extracts we have given, the events we are now about to relate.

Formerly, the Marquis of Mirabeau had attached but little importance to this condemnation of his son; for he wrote on the subject as follows:

"It is nothing but a sentence still; and were it, on appeal, confirmed by a decree, it is too severe and would not be executed*."

Subsequently, he had less confidence in the case.

"Honoré," he again wrote, "has the other business in his head, namely, that of keeping this latter upon his shoulders. Now, this business which he at first looked upon, and continues to look upon as so very easy, will perhaps turn out as difficult as the first he undertook†." "All the best and most able criminalists whom

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 5th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 16th 1781. This was an allusion to

I have consulted say that the case is frightfully complicated, and the sentence well combined and secure against an appeal, whilst its terms are so general that they place the culprit's life at the absolute mercy of the judge, and this for a crime never before committed even from the days of Louis the Fat, and against which the law could not have provided, Honoré will believe nothing of the kind; he gets furious, becomes red in the face, and scribbles night and day *."

The Bailli also "would believe nothing."

"The full particulars," he wrote, "of the Pontarlier business, are not yet known to me; but I have common sense, and am out of my teens. If it be true that the silly woman went to him, and that he did not carry her off from her own house, it then becomes her affair, not his. The business is as simple to every other person as to ourselves. But truly all the scoundrels in Europe—I mean all the Knights of the inkhorn, a set of rascals whom your favourite Turgotism has rendered more mutinous than ever—together with the farmers of the revenue, *et hoc genus omne*, have sworn to overthrow the nobles, and your house in particular†. Louis XV, I believe, lived some little time later than Louis the Fat, and yet the crime with which your son is charged

Mirabeau's attempt to bring his mother to an amicable settlement with his father.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, with same date.

occurred two hundred times during his reign, twenty times of which it took place in Provence. It is true that in two cases which are now before me, the husband was not mean enough to prosecute either criminally or otherwise.

"How can a man of your attainments suffer himself to be told that the crime is without example, and that the law has not provided against the abduction of another man's wife?—The law has applied a penalty to this offence, and not a year passes but, in some part of the kingdom or other, the penalty is enforced. Now the whole question is, I say not morally, for a crime is always a crime, but legally—to know whether Honoré really carried off this woman. If he did, it makes the thing very serious; but if she went to him it materially alters the case, and the thing pardonable enough. She alone would then be seriously implicated. Now the fact proved is that the madcap fled alone from her old husband, and went to seek the other beyond the French frontier. This is the buckler and javelin of your son's defence. A young and handsome woman goes to a young man of twenty-six: and where will you find a young man, who does not pick up whatever he finds of this description in his road? In the present case it may well be said: let him who is guiltless cast the first stone.' But first, You have to do with the robed rabble, who are injured by the fact as it stands; and how could you possibly obtain justice from the agents

of injustice clad in the mantle of justice?—Secondly, You have yourself offended this rabble, by your writings about the regulations*. It would have been much better to have placed in the catalogue of saints celebrated by Bussy, all the court, the Marshals of France, &c., than to have dishonoured the nuptial couch of an old upstart dotard raised, like a scene in a theatre, by a whistle, and upon whose shield a venal charge had placed the fleur-de-lys†. It would have been far better to have killed four princes, than to have wounded the pretended honour of an old law noble, a species of men who must of necessity lead either to an aristo-democracy, or to the harshest despotism, and who are supported by each other in such a manner that every thing belonging to them is sacred ‡."

Notwithstanding the doubts raised by one brother and repelled by the other, the appeal was determined

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 29th 1781. We also find in it this passage connected with a fact which we have already mentioned in a former part of this work.

"We should know what we can depend upon with reference to the pretended abduction, if it were possible to expect the truth from a woman. You must remember that, in 1778, I begged you would obtain something in the hand-writing of this one, to compare it with a letter addressed to the Marchioness of Vence, and signed by this Madame de Monnier, who therein completely exonerated the Count."

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 16th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 16th 1781.

upon. But the difficulty was, how to proceed in reviving this dangerous litigation. They feared the discussion concerning the lengthened procedure which took place prior to the condemnation by default, as leading to the probable necessity of beginning it over again. This would occupy an immense time, put the party to a prodigious expense, bring before a public court of justice a name already rendered notorious by being mentioned in the lawsuit between the Marquis and Marchioness of Mirabeau, and in the complaint made by their daughter, Madame de Cabris. It would likewise revive the remembrance of Mirabeau's errors, provoke fatal recriminations and furious pleadings, and complicate the already difficult reconciliation to be effected in Provence, which it would render much more doubtful.

The family was much struck with these considerations; and an appeal from justice to favour was thought of—from the tribunal which had condemned, to the sovereign; in one word, it was proposed to solicit letters of abolition. The plan was laid down—the success was certain; "for," wrote the Marquis, "all the cabinets are made of butter, and the powers themselves of brass *." But this project could not be carried into execution without Mirabeau's concurrence, which he peremptorily refused, because the absolution freed him alone, and he would not separate his case from

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 28th 1781.

that of Sophie. This generous woman wrote to insist upon his giving up so dangerous a partnership, and consenting to the measure proposed.

This fact is not given upon the sole affirmation of Mirabeau. We shall soon present other evidence, but we first present his.

Two months subsequently, he exclaimed before his judges :—

"The sentence passed at Pontarlier is dreadful; the procedure is disgraceful. Presumptions have received, by all sorts of manœuvres, the force of proofs. The mistakes or the prejudices of judges are formidable things. The offence of which you are accused is not infamous among us. Throw yourself upon the King's mercy, and demand letters of abolition *. But, would I confess myself guilty and thus furnish evidence

* "Perhaps it will easily be credited, that a man of my condition, who has had to fight against the most inveterate enemies, might employ more than one means of support. But I chose to have no other than that venerable protection which the law commands its indifferent agents to afford. I would oppose only the rights which I hold in common with the most obscure citizens, to enemies who, in their own towns, force me to appeal before courts of justice, filled, they say, with their relatives and friends. And whilst they are busy in researches, in exertions, in consultations, and in intrigues, I accept all, I endure all, I dictate all—I am sufficient for myself. I am arrested; quirks and quibbles of all sorts are placed before my footsteps; and disgust, and delays, and lengthened proceedings are multiplied. But what matters it?—ought I not to have expected this?"—*Second Case for Counsel's Opinion, page 75 of the 8vo. edition.*

against the unfortunate woman to effect whose ruin I have been made the occasion and pretence? No, certainly, I would not be guilty of such baseness! My heart, my conscience, and my reason tell me that I have nothing to fear. I will go to my judges, said I..... and if I find only murderers—well! there remains plenty of my name to avenge my blood and my memory*."

Besides this public declaration, Mirabeau shortly afterwards wrote thus:—

"Your friend will have the sweet pleasure of having made amends by his first effort, and from the very moment he was permitted to act, for the misfortunes of a woman whom he had unhappily committed to such an extent†."

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* *First Case for Counsel's Opinion*, &c., page 12 of the 8vo. edition. Mirabeau had already made the same profession of faith in a letter not intended to be made public.

"All I know," he wrote, "is this: I laugh at the proceedings so far as I am myself concerned; for I have a thousand ways both in fact and in law to overthrow them. But I will never forgive the insult of my execution in effigy except on the most favourable conditions for Madame de Monnier. I will sign only at this price."—*Unpublished Letter to Boucher, dated October 5th* 1779.

† Unpublished letters from Mirabeau to Vitry, page 65. In acting thus, Mirabeau recollected, much better than Sophie herself, who was at this time led away by a feeling of generosity, what she had previously thought and wrote.

"The judgment pronounced must be either annulled or confirmed. If I am declared an adulteress, my dower will be confiscated; if I am not declared such, I cannot lose my rights. Fortune, and even life affect me but little. But my honour will not allow this matter to rest as it is; it must be brought to a close at all risks."—*Letter*

The fact of Mirabeau's courageous and just refusal to solicit letters of abolition, is, as we have already stated, attested by others besides himself. The following proof is quite sufficient without our giving any other.

" If Gabriel had not wished to save his accomplice, he would not so peremptorily have refused letters of abolition. And to make an end of the matter, he would have quietly drawn himself out of the scrape without her; for you are well aware that it was not to him that Madame de Valdahon was hostile, since he was not her father's wife*."

The family were therefore obliged to make up their minds to the appeal. But how was it to be conducted? The father and uncle were of opinion that the defence should be timid and even supplicating; and they insisted the more upon this because, at the beginning, the party appealing had no adverse party in the civil part of the action †, and the accuser had, as it were, failed in his accusation, since the Marquis of Monnier, who, in his original complaint had not even mentioned

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already quoted from Madame de Monnier to her mother, Madame de Ruffey, dated June 19th 1776.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 27th 1782.

† According to the criminal law of France, the public prosecutor can alone prosecute a criminal suit; the injured party may become *partie civile*, and can sue only for civil damages, though, if the prosecution fails, the *partie civile* pays all the costs.—Tr.

the fact of adultery, was, from age, infirmity, blindness, a fit of piety, and "a complete indifference to the affairs of this world," unable to appear against him *, and that the instance would be maintained by Madame de Valdahon alone, whom no personal injury had excited against the party appealing †, and who had then nothing to fear from little Gabrielle Sophie, that child having died two years previously. Madame Valdahon could now have only one subject of apprehension that of seeing her step-mother, Madame de Monnier, again appear and claim a restitution of conjugal rights. But being freed from this apprehension by a formal renunciation, she was little disposed to carry matters to extremities in a criminal prosecution, the enormous expense of which might put her to great inconvenience, if it ended in the acquittal of the accused.

This feeling in the only adverse party Mirabeau had, led to the opinion of his father and uncle, that he ought to present himself in the most modest attitude. How many other men in his situation would have done so,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1782.

† Far from it; for it was to the consequences of Mirabeau's passion for her step-mother that she owed her return to her father's house whence she had been driven for twenty years (*second case for Counsel's opinion*, &c., p. 60), and the certainty, thenceforward not doubtful, of recovering her rights as the daughter of the Marquis of Monnier, which rights had been destroyed ever since 1768, by her exheredation incurred by her marriage with M. de Valdahon, and by the second marriage of the vindictive old man.

or else avoided placing themselves at the disposal of a set of prejudiced judges, who had already condemned him to death. Mirabeau, on the contrary, went, with a calm eye, to brave the danger. He had, no doubt, resolved to persist in his efforts at conciliation; but if he failed, he would make a defence quite the reverse of the one indicated by his family. Every thing urged him to this—his fiery nature, a sense of his power, and the instinctive want of bringing it into play. His conviction of the illegality of the procedure *, the singular omission in the accusation of the nominative crime of adultery, the want of legal evidence, the absurdity of a "rape of seduction," committed "upon a married woman †", the wish of awakening interest in behalf of his co-accused, the pity excited by his own misfortunes, the indignation caused by an extra-legal and over

* This is what Mirabeau said of the procedure, two years before he endeavoured to get it quashed.

"The notice you give me of the procedure, proves perfectly well that which I never doubted, namely, that it is absurd and cannot be maintained. It could not stand an instant against a simple statement of the contradictions and evident falsehoods which it contains." —*Original letters from Vincennes, Vol. IV. page* 234.

† "The discoveries we have made here, and the means given to us, have enabled us to embrace a system of defence which exonerates Madame de Monnier as well as myself; for the charge of adultery is not more maintainable, on account of the nature of their evidence obtained in a foreign country, and of which a French tribunal can make no use, than *the rape of seduction*, by the nature of the crime which, towards a married woman, is a purely imaginary one."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February* 14*th* 1782.

severe sentence—the hope of alarming his adverse party, who had so little interest in the litigation—and lastly, the advantage of being able, at a subsequent period, to make good use, in Provence, of a haughty and vehement defence, which should at the same time attack and accuse; all this determined Mirabeau to be moderate, and display humility only at the commencement of the business, but to become himself again when his entreaties should be repulsed, and to throw far from him the mark imposed upon him by his family, so soon as he should be forced to appear in the presence of his judges, whom it was his intention to brave, and of his accusers, whom he resolved to reduce to silence.

What we have before said concerning the plan of our work, and the spirit in which it is written, renders it unnecessary for us to give a lengthened account of this appeal, and to transcribe a great number of extracts from the statements published—extracts which others have so liberally supplied as to fill nearly a volume*. We shall not follow this example, not only because it

* Peuchet, Vol. II. pp. 20 to 126. Vitry, pp. 77 to 115; 133 to 189; 200 to 229. This abuse of quotation ought to be avoided the more because the statements published are by no means scarce, and they contain many passages to be found in the letters from Vincennes, whence Mirabeau took them; first, because he was accustomed to borrow from himself; and next, because he was far from supposing that those letters would ever be published.

In the statements from Pontarlier and Aix, some paragraphs may be found which are in the letters written by Mirabeau to Vitry, who published them in 1806.

is our wish to insert only that which cannot be found in any other work, but because a much more serious motive imposes upon us very great prudence in this respect.

We admit, and many persons know, that Mirabeau's printed statements are full of eloquence, to such a degree that they form a model of judicial argument, and display the germ of that immense power which Mirabeau afterwards developed as an orator. But these documents, have the disadvantage, at least for ourselves, of treating only of a private question, reviving deplorable facts—implicating names which should not now be uttered, because they were borne by honourable persons, whose lives, troubled by his passions, have since ended —and presenting odious recriminations, and, let us not mince the expression, immoral justifications.

We shall therefore reduce this lamentable subject to a rapid position of the successive plans of the appeal; borrowing our account principally from the unpublished family correspondence.

BOOK XI.

On the 2nd of February 1782, Mirabeau, full of hope and courage, left Bignon *.

" He yesterday set sail with very good grace, that is to say, in a noble and affecting manner; and they are now upon the road supplied with everything necessary to their undertaking. I have declared that I am no

* Some biographers, on the authority of Cadet Gassicourt (p. 27, first edition, and 21 of the second) have stated that before Mirabeau's departure, he "shared with Madame Monnier an active poison which he had been prepared under his directions." We have no knowledge of this fact, neither do we believe it to be true. Cadet Gassicourt throws a doubt upon his own statement, by thoughtlessly adding in a note—" Manuel one day showed me at Desenne's [the bookseller] the little bag containing these two articles [the poison and a lock of hair.] He had *stolen* it with Mirabeau's letters." Now, Manuel could not have stolen anything from the police-office but what was there; and this consisted of what had been deposited there by Boucher, from the beginning of the correspondence from Vincennes to its conclusion on the 13th of December 1780. For the bag in question to have been there, Mirabeau

longer a writer, especially on important matters, there being nothing so ridiculous as a dialogue between the highway and the chimney corner *."

The Marquis still persevered in his favourable feelings, or at least in assuming them if they were not real; for in the same letter he says:—

"He continues turbulent and irregular; but he intends to correct himself, and is not troublesome. He is kind and noble, and all agree that he has a good heart †. Honoré and consort ‡ found the winter rather late, for it is only just set in; and as the snow is seven or eight feet deep in the country in which they are, the surplus at first appeared strange to your nephew who has become 'an advocate in the court.' But he is rural and bold. Ever since the days of the late Julius

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must have carried it thither two years after his release. Who, therefore, can credit such an assertion so positively contradicted by date, to which most of Mirabeau's biographers have paid no more attention than they have to truth, and even probability?

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 3rd 1782.

† Same unpublished letter.

‡ He was accompanied by an advocate named Desbirons, who filled the office of Procureur du Roi at the little town of Cheroy-en-Gatinais. Desbirons, who had knowledge and talent, acted nevertheless only as Mirabeau's examiner of documents and copying clerk. His letters, which we possess, often express in the most humourous manner his surprise and vexation at being reduced, by the unexpected superiority and ascendancy of his client, to play such a part.

Cæsar, audacity and rashness have no where existed so strongly as in him. He pretends that he has a portion of Cæsar's star; he has, certainly, less genius, but great talent, though unhappily he looks from right to left. In a case like the present, I place great reliance upon his skill and abilities *."

Having been delayed by accidents on the road, Mirabeau did not reach Dijon till the 6th of February. His advocate, Desbirons, called upon Madame de Ruffey, who promised, if she did not join in the appeal, at least to sanction any compromise in which the most favourable terms possible should be stipulated for on behalf of her daughter.

On the 8th of February, Mirabeau, who had merely passed through Pontarlier and taken up his temporary abode upon the Swiss frontier, sent his advocate to attempt an arrangement with Madame de Valdahon, the Marquis of Monnier being inaccessible †. But this

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 15th 1782.

† "We knew that the gates of Tænarus are not more strictly guarded; we were aware that Madame de Valdahon had her father's house guarded by the Maréchaussée. We also knew that the unhappy old man had been deprived of all his old servants, and was surrounded by emissaries who reported his very words, gestures, and even signs; thus placing an impenetrable barrier betwixt him and all that could remind him of his involuntary injustice and their unfortunate victim." — *First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 14, 8vo edition.

lady refused to see Desbirons.* On the 9th, Mirabeau wrote to her in this advocate's name, a strong, but measured and conciliatory letter †, in which he solicited an early reply, because he had reason to fear that snares would be laid for him ‡. This step was also unsuccessful. On the 12th, Mirabeau surrendered himself a prisoner, but it was with the greatest difficulty that he could obtain an entry in the prison register that he "had voluntarily presented himself." This first difficulty made him anticipate many others, which were soon realised. One among them was this: —although his condemnation had resulted from a complaint made by the husband, and this complaint, which was vague and insufficient, did not specify the fact of adultery,—a strong means of defence for the accused, as none but a husband could legally prefer such a charge—still Mirabeau could not obtain a copy of this complaint, nor permission to see it, nor that it should be read to him, nor even that it should be countersigned *ne varietur* §.

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* Ibid. p. 14.

† Ibid. pp. 16, 17, 18, and 19.

‡ "He (Mirabeau) cannot, under the most frivolous pretences, remain concealed, and expose himself to its being perfidiously stated hereafter that he has been arrested, whilst the truth is he has come to give himself up voluntarily." — *First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 18, 8vo edition.

§ The Commissioner would not allow me to see this document, the immutability of which I had such strong reasons for securing by

He did not, however, take an undue advantage of the irregularities of form in the proceedings, to avoid a series of interrogatories, in which his defence assumed so hostile a character that a proposal of compromise was made to him. This he would not now listen to, except on condition of his being provisionally released from prison, which was granted by interlocutory sentence on the 16th. But an appeal from this sentence was immediately entered, Sombarde, assistant to the Procureur du Roi, then acting as public prosecutor. It was now that Mirabeau published his first case for Counsel's opinion. The tone and measure of this publication may be judged of from what the writer himself says of it.

"If anything is more to be regretted than having committed grievous wrongs, it is the necessity imposed, by the natural disgust which they inspire, of defending ourselves against those falsely imputed to us. But when a man is sorry, from the bottom of his soul, for those he has really committed, and feels an earnest wish to hide them under the cloak of a life perfectly honourable in future; when he can with truth assert that extreme sensibility, and inflexible honesty have attended those errors which cannot be denied, he consoles himself sufficiently at least not to lose his courage, but to

every possible means, physical and moral."—*First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 26, 8vo edition.

render it mild and patient *. He believes that there is, perhaps, greater courage in confessing his faults, than in not committing any: in the former case he expresses his repentance and regret with just and noble candour —he atones for the wrongs he has committed, as much as lies in his power — he endeavours to justify the indulgence of the friends who have remained faithful to him — to bring back those who have withdrawn their regard from him, and to disarm his enemies by applauding their good qualities and forgiving their faults. He does his best to act with rectitude, calmness, and propriety:—having done this, he may lift up his head, and look his calumniators in the face.

"I have now begun. In a former statement † I raised a corner of the veil in which those, who chose to prosecute the sad suit which necessitates this statement, would fain unfold themselves. I have used more delicate precautions towards them than towards myself, because to obtain justice from others, a man must begin by doing it to himself ‡."

We here add the energetic and unanswerable conclusion of this statement.

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* "Reasons without number have imposed upon me the duty of a moderation which I have always considered a virtue of a more lofty character, because my fiery temper renders it less natural." *Third case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 6, of the 8vo edition.

† This case was not published.

‡ First case for Counsel's opinion in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 3, 8vo edition.

"In sum:—

"The accusation of rape of seduction cannot exist*.

"The adultery has not been proved †.

"It cannot be proved ‡.

"Were it proven there existed neither accusation nor accuser §.

"What remains, then, imputable to me?

"NOTHING.

"Such is the criminal prosecution which, during five years past, has carried desolation into the bosom of two families, trembling even now at my rashness. Behold then, this prosecution which, for five whole years, has deprived me of my civil existence, * * * and has forced a young female, known by her sensibility, her benevolence, and all the good qualities upon which virtue germinates, to consume the best days of her youth under bolts and bars.

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"Such is this prosecution, which was tried in two hours, whilst the same judges have been deliberating during two whole days, whether they will or not grant

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* According to the ordinances of 1639 and 1730, *rape of seduction* was admitted to exist, and could be punished only "between unmarried persons."

† Evidence of this could be adduced only by witnesses either dependent, or challengeable, or accomplices.

‡ The facts had taken place in a foreign country.

§ We have already stated that the husband in his complaint did not mention adultery.

me a provisional release from prison. * * * * * Yes! two hours after the trial began, sentence was pronounced by four judges, the others being absent, condemning a man of quality to lose his head by the axe of the public executioner, and a young wife, so gentle, so interesting, so beloved in the very place where they were inflicting disgrace upon her, that her fate would have melted a tiger, to be torn like a blank leaf from the book of the living. * * * * All this was done in two hours * * * * and they are now deliberating above my head *."

Let us look elsewhere for what Mirabeau said of this

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* First Case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page 32.

"What absurdities!—what horrors! O ye who thus trifle with men's lives—ye who do not turn pale at the sight of him you have condemned with such atrocious levity, did you think you should never behold me again? Had you then the promise of the Master of Destiny that His Providence would confirm your odious sentence, and ask back my life of me, before I could defend it against your sanguinary decrees? And you, kind reader, to whom even the most regular of criminal prosecutions is an object either of compassion or of indignation—you who have a horror of the useless profusion of executions, of the examples of atrocity and barbarity which they hold out to man, and of the dreadful right which men assume of putting their fellow-creatures to death—you to whom every fellow-man is a brother—only suppose, for an instant, that I am a different person; suppose that an obscure citizen, without a name, without fortune, without relations or friends, and, if I may be allowed to say it, less courageous and active, were in my situation—judge what would be his fate, what sentence would be pronounced, affecting his honour and life, since I have been condemned in such a manner!"—*Second Case for Counsel's opinion, &c.*, page 58.

first published Case, a composition remarkable, at least, for a very able defence of a very bad cause.

" My Case is drawn up, and I did it in a single morning. I have had the happiness of being able to mention my errors with dignity, my co-accused with interest, and her husband with respect—though he is a poor automaton, acted upon by the passions of others. I have spoken with veneration of my father, with tenderness of my beloved sister, with moderation of many of my opponents; for recollect, that in my present situation, even the exercise of generosity is of advantage, because it conceals from the public what I am obliged to omit or disguise in my defence. For I do not want to save myself alone; how, therefore, can I disclose all? However, I am not dissatisfied with myself. I cannot send you a copy to-day, as I had hoped to do, because these people, forcing, as they do, to proceed document in hand, we are overloaded with work in an incredible manner. You shall receive it by the next post *."

Up to this period the Marquis had approved of the steps taken by his son.

" His pace is firm," he wrote, " and the post he occupies the most advantageous possible, except that his defences are puffed out with Latin, which is a crime against his judges, who do not understand that lan-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 17th 1782.

guage. In the last accounts I received, I found him too bold. But since the arch of misalliance has occasioned in the hall of justice a reflux of fetid causes, like the waters of the Jordan in former times, and these men are heaped up together, and smoked with sulphur, in the guise of incense, they fancy that every petition must be a dedicatory epistle *. People are beginning to say that this singular mode of appealing from a sentence of death, is both bold and noble; that the appellant has never yet had an opportunity of bringing his wine vat into a state of profitable fermentation; and that, after all, the insolence of his petitions is the uniform belonging to the hazardous game he is playing †. At present, I see him in the saddle: he sits his horse well, and will have the real advantage, with regard to public opinion, of totally clearing his accomplice, which he wanted to do at any price. You have no idea of your nephew's power on great occasions: dangerous as it would be to gauge him then, and apply the measure to his every-day life, in the same degree may you depend upon him for being, in extreme cases, very superior to a wise man ‡."

The renewal of Mirabeau's imprisonment rendered

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 22d 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 6th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 1st 1782.

fresh interrogations necessary. He now maintained that French judges were not competent to take evidence of facts which had occurred in foreign countries (Switzerland and Holland). Offers of compromise were again made to him *, but he rejected them, being determined, as he said, before he listened to any terms, to obtain a provisional release, which was not granted to him, from the effect of a partiality of which he bitterly complained, and which, independently of the evidence adduced in the published cases †, is also mentioned in one of the Bailli's letters.

" I hear that the Procureur du Roi has appealed. I have a copy of the interrogatories ; and I perceive that Honoré can teach his advocate a good deal—for those vile venders of words have nothing in their mouths but

* On this occasion he said, " My enemies, persuaded that one of their victims cannot escape without the other, dare not make peace, nor declare war."—*Second Case, &c.*, p. 38 of the 8vo edition.

† " It was necessary the case should be tried in a little town, of which M. de Monnier seems to be the sovereign, by four men, two of whom, relatives of my adverse party, were also his attorneys, his devoted servants, his counsel, and in strict dependence upon him. It was necessary, in fine, that the informations which were to serve as the basis of the judgments, decrees, and revision of the proceedings, should be taken by a cruel and mortal enemy."—*Third Case, &c.*, p. 33.

" They made haste to try, condemn, and immolate me, and the success of their base conspiracy has not even freed me from their insults. They have not kept up even the most simple appearances. Their confederacy is known, public, and acknowledged, and their intimacy with the parties scandalously evident.... and yet they talk of my boldness."—*Ibid*, p. 39.

what is insinuated into their ears—and that he defends himself like green wood against the fire. But I likewise perceive that all is corrupt, and this makes me tremble, although he has found out the secret of denying every thing, and rendering the crime improbable, which may be of great use to him here *."

Meanwhile, the Court declared, by an interlocutory judgment, its own competency to take cognisance of facts which had occurred out of the kingdom. The confrontation of the accused with the native witnesses was now about to take place, and Mirabeau was preparing himself for it. He wrote on this occasion as follows:—

" The truly formidable statement, if I am forced to make it, will be that concerning the confrontation †."

This confrontation was ordered by a judgment delivered on the 21st of February. Mirabeau thus mentions it:—

" I have this day undergone a confrontation of ten hours, with only two witnesses, whom, thank God! I have made pay dearly for the enjoyment ‡."

The Bailli expresses himself in the same sense.

" He has just been twisting about, at a confrontation, the most ocular witnesses, and making them contra-

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1782.

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated February 17th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 5th 1782.

dict themselves, though they had been well tutored and crammed for the occasion *.

Mirabeau, at the same time, was at work with the Council of Neufchatel, which notwithstanding the presence and exertion of the public prosecutor, Sombarde, who had gone thither on purpose, commanded the witnesses of their jurisdiction not to answer concerning offences committed within the territory of that state †."

The Marquis's letters, from which we have just extracted, had preceded the publication, or, at all events, the reception of Mirabeau's first Case; but this production, under Madame du Pailly's comments, greatly displeased this fickle-minded parent.

" I recognise," wrote Mirabeau, " the harpy whose impure breath poisons every thing. My father is furious against the case, and pretends that a second will prove his death. But none of my counsel will answer for my success unless every defence is published, because the prosecution, if it be well-founded in law, is not so in the public opinion, and it is this which necessitates the publication of my Cases; for what with the ignorance of the first judges, the very notorious prejudices of the present judges, and the intrigues of the adverse parties, it is certain that they would gladly

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 10th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 7th 1782.

avail themselves of *public opinion* to condemn us in darkness, if we did not ourselves light the lamps. We are here deprived of every thing and deserted; not a relative appears to take our part; *alone against all* is our motto. And yet we are advised to give ourselves up, by our silence, to all that intrigue and subornation may raise against us. We possess nothing but our pen, and yet they would destroy it. If you knew from how many manœuvres the fear of these published Cases has saved us, you would admit the propriety of sending forth to the public a simple essay which, without driving our enemies to despair, might keep our judges in awe *. You might have dispensed with your round-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 21st 1782.

" Is it true that they are astonished at the energy of my complaints, or that they disapproved of them? Have I preferred any that were not well-founded? Can I be accused of having struck in the dark? No:—I have proclaimed aloud the names of my accusers. They dare to blame me for even my candour, and my firmness. I believe it:—they would fain reduce me to their own base level; they would fain see me have recourse to weapons the use of which is so familiar to them that they have no fear of being eclipsed in their skill. For my own part, I have only one line of conduct to oppose to so much manœuvring, to so many secret denunciations which have more than once placed me in jeopardy:—this is to give the utmost publicity to my defence. The proceedings and manuscript statements buried in the court offices, are easily put on one side, and still more easily forgotten; it is therefore to the broad light of day that crimes and calumnies ought to be exposed. It is to the public that respect paid to persons, hidden connivance, secret subornation, and annoyances in detail, should be denounced. Then, to be pru-

about way of making known to me my father's borrowed opinion of my case, for he has written to me the most unreasonable and harshest things. Surely, whoever asserts that this composition 'is evidently dedicated to libertines,' must have read it in a singular manner. I think that the picture I have drawn of my captivity at Vincennes, may not have pleased him who kept me there so long. But I doubt that it will appear badly written to many others, and I imagine that in this statement, I have confessed evil enough of myself to be allowed an attempt to move people by my misfortunes. I thought that you would explain to me this inconceivable fit of ill-humour in my father. I believe that a certain person has made him dread my success; and I do not think it possible to experience a harshness more cruel than this which occurs at a time when I am so greatly in want of assistance, and am so bitterly opposed, being obliged to struggle single-handed against all my adversaries; and when—thanks to the fury whom fate has let loose upon our house for its downfall —the appeal which alone ought to occupy my mind is

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dent will not prove sufficient to dispense with being just; then, the voice of honest people may compensate for the imperfection of the laws, and maintain within the bounds of equity those who hold any portion of the public authority, and who, like all other men, are accessible to passion. * * * *

It became necessary, therefore, that I should challenge or change the public opinion, since my enemies constantly attest the notoriety they have produced.—*Third Case for Counsel's opinion, &c.* page 28.

the matter that costs me the least time and exertion *. What rage!—What a dread have they of my gaining so necessary a victory, and giving the public a better opinion of me than they have attempted to give! All this may prove highly dangerous, by showing me as I am,—that is to say, completely abandoned, and having no worse enemies than in the bosom of my own family †.

"I really do not at all see the drift of your arguments. What!—because I considered myself sure, it was not necessary to publish a defence! What a conclusion! Do, pray, consider the infernal cabal against me, and the necessity of striking rascals and prejudiced judges with awe. And then you say, I have been a little too fast. You, a hundred leagues off, are really singular in your judgments; the space between us diminishes objects, and makes their particular details disappear; you, therefore, surely cannot tell what they should do who are acting upon the spot, and on close inspection. We require to be supported, and not blamed—caressed, and not bitten; but with the most honest people in the world, the absent are always wrong. Such is human nature ‡."

At the same time, the Marquis wrote—

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated March 28th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 2nd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 4th 1782.

"You have no idea of what he terms his defences. I never found him so mad. He has humiliated the witnesses, exasperated the judges, insulted everybody, and really fancies himself innocent, oppressed, moderate, and magnanimous—in a word, it is bedlam broken loose *."

Mirabeau, meanwhile, persisted in pursuing the line he had traced out.

"It is possible you do not know, but my father knows, that judges neither can nor ought to decide like ordinary men; that they can pronounce only as judges; that facts, said to be the most notorious, are nothing to them, unless legally proved; that, therefore, it matters little whether 'the facts are too well known,' which you do not cease repeating, but it matters much that they should not be *proven;* and this is the reason why, without you, in spite of you, and against your opinion, we have gained almost every

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 8th 1782. Three days subsequently, the Marquis wrote—

"The Case he has published has filled every one with indignation. It has been found so insolent, that it has done him irreparable injury. He had already inspired terror and horror—now the feeling towards him is hatred, so far as, in this place, I can come to any correct conclusion. When I remonstrate, it is considered an offence: I therefore leave them to their infallibility. It is a great annoyance to me to acknowledge the receipt of their packets; and, certainly, I shall have nothing to do with the business, either by myself, or through others."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 11th* 1782.

incidental point we have undertaken. What prejudice can, therefore, be entertained against our mode of defence, which has hitherto been so successful, and is so highly praised, boasted of, and strongly seconded by the Ruffey family, who have the greatest stake in the business, and therefore ought to be the most indisposed against me, and, consequently, the most difficult to satisfy *. Excuse me, if I return candour for candour. Truly, I can find in yours nothing but fresh reasons for loving and esteeming you; but my heart is so full, so wounded, so discontented, that it must overflow into your bosom, always ready to console me, and in which I ever find affection and kindness †."

The appeal from the decree, granting a provisional release, was prosecuted at Besançon, and Mirabeau published a second Case, addressed less to the attention of the judges than constituting an appeal to public opinion.

" Only imagine that the Case is published on the printer's account, whom I pay for the reserved copies only. The others are eagerly purchased by the public ‡."

In this second Case, Mirabeau explains that his escape from the castle of Joux was quite independent of the connexion he is accused of having formed with Madame

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 7th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, already quoted, dated April 11th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 23rd 1782.

de Monnier,—the sole cause of it being the persecutions of the Commandant St. Mauris, who now, as formerly, was kind face to face, and hostile behind his back *. On this occasion, he transcribes the eloquent letters we have already given. He exposes the violence which Madame de Valdahon exercised towards her father, in order to force him to become a civil party in this suit. He shows, by textual quotations, and the most able arguments, that the law does not acknowledge and punish "rape of seduction," except between "unmarried persons." He quotes, discusses, and refutes the evidence received. He inserts the prohibition of the magistrates of Neufchatel. He returns to the charge of "rape of seduction;" and he comments also upon that of adultery, a private offence, the denunciation of which belongs only to the husband, who nevertheless, *solus genialis tori vindex*, is mute on the present occasion. He examines the twenty-three depositions invoked out of the ninety-one formerly taken

* "I make all the advances to M. de St. Mauris. Every day he sent to know how I was, and I returned this civility. His confrontation, far from being stormy, was full of mutual civility, and he embraced me when he went away. * * * *

"This kiss, a pledge of new treachery, announced to me his infamous conduct in giving one of my letters to compare it with the one in the proceedings!"—*Third Case for Counsel's opinion, &c.* p. 81. 8vo edition.

The reader may remember that the letter "in the proceedings" had been furnished by this same St. Mauris, who, in March 1777, had received it from Mademoiselle Barbaud.

during the informations; and he disposes of fourteen, by which he deprives the accusation of all its resources. Taking the nine other depositions, he sets aside six, which are unconnected, vague, and contradictory; and he rejects the three others, because they emanate from servants of the accuser. After the most energetic arguments, he comes to forms of conciliation; speaking, nevertheless, of his chances in appeal with a confidence which he, perhaps, really felt at the same time that he expressed it in the interest of his cause *.

* If I wished to consume my life in lawsuits, I have not the slightest doubt, that if I might bring an action against my first judges, and take vengeance upon them for their atrocious sentence against me, which they rendered with the most scandalous precipitancy, whilst, at present, I have been left more than two months in the most horrible, filthy, indecent, and unwholesome prison, to present a justification which might have been made in a fortnight. So hasty a despotism formerly, so infamous a delay, and so criminal a partiality now, would, no doubt, incur an exemplary punishment, if I followed up the case with just indignation, and my usual burning activity. But what should I gain by this eternal enmity? All these men have proved themselves rather weak than corrupt, with the exception of Sombarde, the prevaricator. With him alone will I wage war, both as a man and a citizen. As for the others, I absolve them so far as lays in my power. * * * * * What is more honourable than indulgence, even towards those who might justify the whole world in showing them none? I am far, alas! from being of this number. My fiery and culpable youth has cost me dear; it has also cost others a great deal, and I cannot excuse in myself this misfortune, as I could do it if it were only personal to myself."—*Second Case for Counsel's opinion, &c.*, p. 210. 8vo edition.

The necessity of not exceeding our limits, forces us, to our great

Notwithstanding Mirabeau's precautions of style in this second publication, it increased his father's displeasure.

" His second eruption has not been at all successful, but has completely broken the neck of this horrible madman *."

The Bailli was of a different opinion.

" I perceive that I am a better judge than you of what is passing under your very nose. You yourself admitted, in the beginning, that to your great surprise the Case of the *infallible* had been a very successful publication, and that at Paris it was praised. Now do you not see the bottom of things?—did you believe that people would examine them as casuists?—and because they concerned us and ours, was it necessary that what was should not be?—and that a very ordinary circumstance should be converted into an unparalleled monstrosity, and lead to a moral upon which to theorise and to dogmatise? Do you not know Paris—that gulf of men, and manners, and ideas, promiscuously disgraceful and corrupt †? Know you not

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regret, to suppress this admirable peroration, of which, however, we shall translate a portion, when we give an account of Mirabeau's views and labours, on the formation of courts of justice, on the theory of penal laws, and on proceedings in criminal matters, &c.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 26th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 20th 1782.

that the Parisian dregs and filth which soil the walls of this vast manufactory of follies and crimes, have no greater styptic for mankind than the torpor in which the life that is led there keeps the heart*? Who in that infamous Babylon, where every thing scandalous in such an affair, is soldered, cicatrised, and consolidated, is not, either by deed or will, guilty of all that is essentially blameable in the conduct of the *infallible?* It is true that he has given it more *éclat;* but the ground work of the thing is the same: adultery, rape, and seduction, supposing him to be guilty of all three, though he is guilty of one only, form the history of almost all men; in his case there is only a noisy publicity in addition†."

Alas! the Bailli was right. It is on account of the "noisy publicity in addition," that stains of immorality have tarnished the memory of Mirabeau, who did no worse than thousands of other men of whom posterity has taken no notice, because the powers of mighty genius did not bring their errors and misfortunes into notice.

Let us here point out another contrast between the letters of the two brothers. In one of the same date as that whence we extracted the above passage, the Marquis wrote as follows—

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 11th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 6th 1782.

"I have told you every thing about him, and perhaps too much; for it would have been sufficient had I said 'He is mad.' But the syncopations and subdivisions of his madness are infinite in detail. The truth is, he has supplied weapons against himself to all sorts of persons. The quantity of folly and of atrocity that he has committed to paper is astounding; and as he has inspired a general terror,—very ill-founded in my judgment, so far as regards his disposition, but not so with reference to his aptitude at inventing, affirming, and placing every thing in jeopardy,—he has acted with his usual imprudence—accusing one, abusing another, writing every thing against every body. Yet, at bottom, this man who has only the fence of Satan, but not his claws, has not a farthing's worth of malignancy; but he has a treasure of childishness and folly.*"

The event did not correspond with Mirabeau's expectations: his demand of provisional release was rejected by the Chamber of the Tournelle in the Besançon parliament. Three days after, Mirabeau appealed from the whole procedure, to the Great Chamber; and his principal argument for quashing it,—an argument which until then he had kept secret,—was founded upon the relationship between the Marquis of Monnier and the public prosecutor Sombarde, who had shown himself so partial and so vindictive.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 26th 1782.

" Here am I, then, in prison for a month longer, but it is almost impossible for the proceedings not to be quashed by the middle of June *."

But he intended to go much further than this appeal.

" I will tell you, and you alone, that as soon as I am liberated, which they cannot possibly refuse to do, if the proceedings are quashed, I shall set out for Paris and solicit the removal of the cause to another parliament, this being really tainted with partiality †."

The check received from the chamber of the Tournelle, determined the Marquis of Mirabeau to interfere and despatch his son-in-law, M. du Saillant, " not to defend the prisoner, and make common cause with him, but to negociate a compromise;" to which the courageous prisoner replied, that the sight of the scaffold opposite to his window should not induce him to accept proposals in prison ‡.

Who would not take a strong interest in Mirabeau's fate, on reading this declaration? During the most

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated May 9th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 14th 1782. Mirabeau had already, in another letter, explained himself on this subject.

" The vindictiveness and animosity of the parliamentary cabal are at their climax. Desbirons could not even obtain access to the Procureur Général, and the judges drily told him that 'they were relations.'"—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated April 23rd* 1782, page 193.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, page 196.

valuable years of his life, he had been deprived of freedom, of which he had at last just caught a glimpse, after forty-two months of rigorous confinement in the most frightful prison in the kingdom. Having reached the age of thirty-three years, he had received his father's pardon, and was secure from the prosecution of the Marquis of Monnier, who stood upon the brink of the grave, as well as from that of the public prosecutor, kept in check by the influence of the Marquis of Mirabeau. Enjoying freedom and quiet for the first time in his life, nothing remained for him to do but to proceed with the work of his own regeneration. He had now no leisure for running after adventures; and not only was he cured of the passion which had led to his worst faults and misfortunes, but he was eternally separated from the object of that passion, which was extinguished by supposed acts of infidelity of which he thought himself certain, and which the burning jealousy, natural to his character, would never allow him to overlook. Any other man, perhaps, would have yielded to so many powerful reasons, and have suffered himself to be pardoned at the expense of his co-accused. But such was not Mirabeau's nature : he determined, at all risks, to obtain his own acquittal together with that of his accomplice. He accordingly placed his life in the power of the vindictive and prejudiced judges who, in his absence, had condemned him to the capital punishment. He had now already passed five months in an

unhealthy dungeon *; he was sick, surcharged with work, deprived of all pecuniary resources, and his heart corroded with "uneasiness, care, and avenging repentance †." His name was again brought before the public by a second trial, the cause of which had led to his severest misfortunes, and was now likely to endanger all his future prospects. His adversaries harassed him with chicanery, and loaded him with insult. His family had abandoned him, and disavowed his acts..... But nothing could move him: his firmness and confidence remained unshaken, and adversity seemed to have reset his powerful genius in a stronger frame.

Nevertheless, his father pursued the plan he had formed.

"Under the circumstances of the case, I am about to despatch du Saillant seriously to negociate, and finally bring about a compromise. I had always refused his kind offices, in consequence of the affirmation and boasting of those people; and, mad as I thought

* "This prison is dreadful. I am surrounded by men with fever; besides being placed in the most fetid filth, and in such close quarters, that it is impossible to write a single line with a cool head, or to confer with my counsel a quarter of an hour without witnesses." *First Case for Counsel's opinion*, &c., page 34, 8vo edition. In another part of the same work, he mentions "the stinking and tumultuous place in which he is writing," (page 40) "in the midst of smugglers, thieves, and deserters, whose bellowings drive away sleep from the weary eyelids of their neighbours," (page 134).

† Ibid. p. 9, 8vo edition.

them, I was waiting for the first attempt, because I considered that a sleep-walker ought not to be awaked and assisted whilst labouring under the fit; and I was unwilling to incur additional expense, having already had so many wounds inflicted upon my purse, besides notoriety, and other devouring things. But Providence will have it so, and necessity drags me along. Du Saillant is prudent, and a man of business; he well knows the character of his brother-in-law, and will not be brought over by specious arguments to the fellow's way of thinking. He positively declares that he will never become a solicitor in such a disgraceful business; but he will go solely to treat with the parties, who have mutually and equally lost their way.

"The worst for Honoré, in the midst of this, is that everybody thinks him incurably mad, and more so now than ever. They have no doubt that he is trying to do his best, in a matter of such vital importance to himself, they perceiving him in full swing; and discredit has reached its climax. * * * *

"I have forbidden any further publications, on pain of being cast off entirely; but they will obey me just as they have done already *."

Mirabeau, however, was not a man to yield without resistance.

"I did think and I still think that my father's plan

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 15th 1782.

would spoil and will yet spoil all. Such is my opinion, which is free; and I have too deep a stake in the business to justify their forcing me out of my own measures, and taking upon themselves the responsibility of what may ensue *."

The Marquis, however, persisted in acting according to his own view of the case.

" Our madman, who had upon his pate the loss of his incidents †, is again beginning to mistake his farthing rushlights for suns. Du Saillant takes with him the strongest letters to all influential persons connected with that country; at the same time all persons of sense, in every condition, assure him that his brother-in-law has laid his head upon the block, and cannot escape unless he remodels the parliament. The whole country, which sees his madness and crimes, insulted and exasperated by the haughtiness and sarcasms of

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated May 19th 1782.

† Mirabeau was not at all disheartened at this, if we may judge from the following passage in a letter dated May 22nd, which he wrote to his sister. He repeated part of the same passage in a letter written next day to Vitry, and published in page 231 of his collection.

" If you know your brother well, you would be aware that he is never impatient under great difficulties. ' We must never be angry with things,' said Marcus Aurelius, ' for it matters nothing at all to them.' Thus I am often indignant at persons, but things find me always resolute. However, the loss of this incident has nothing to grieve me except the prolongation of my confinement, for my health has no need of it; but numerous as you are, none of you will succeed in making me tremble."

this rash fellow, has sworn to make a memorable example of him. The case always appeared to the lawyers and criminalists a bad one; but he does not cease repeating that they are a set of fools. When he published his first Case, I wrote to him that any future publication would be stabbing me to the heart. Thereupon, he uttered much verbiage, and immediately published twenty opinions of counsel, together with explanations and expositions. Lastly, after having seen his second Case, checkered with rhapsodies picked up right and left, and having already determined to send Du Saillant, I wrote to Honoré that, at length, I was going to save him; but that thenceforward I desired he would publish nothing until I had seen the manuscript.

"This I wrote at Du Saillant's request, as he was anxious his brother-in-law should know nothing of his journey, for fear of the usual boasting, and lest also Honoré should further endanger his own cause. His reply was, that the consequences must fall upon his own shoulders, though he would sacrifice all to obedience; but that he could not prevent his counsel from publishing their opinions, and that I should receive, by the next post, his third Case. Now, I would not swear that this man did not really think, with good faith, that he was obeying my instructions literally *."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 31st 1782. From these explanations, it is easy to imagine that the Marquis impeded as much as possible the circulation

Mirabeau, as we find by the Marquis's letter, had just published his third Case, principally directed against the public prosecutor Sombarde, who, from the very beginning, had performed the duties of Procureur du Roi, and instead of confining himself to the severe but impartial dignity of the magistrate, had never ceased displaying towards Mirabeau, "in defiance of all decency and all rule*," the vindictiveness of personal hatred. This animosity, disgusting in itself, became highly criminal from the fact that Sombarde was related, within the prohibited degree, to the Marquis of Monnier, the complainant in the prosecution. This composition was full of power and eloquence. The author himself said of it: "if this be not eloquence unknown in these enslaved times, I know not what that gift of heaven is, so seducing and so rare†."

He spoke of it to his sister in more humble terms.

"You must before this have received my third Case, the sole object of which is to rouse the indignation

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of these publications. It was not without the greatest difficulty that the friends of Mirabeau succeeded in distributing these Cases, which he sent to them privately. Such readers as may feel interested in the particulars, may find them at great length in Vitry's collection.

* Third Case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page 12.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Vitry, dated May 12th 1782, page 200. It was by mistake that M. Villemain (Cours de Littérature Française, Part III. page 21) applied this saying of Mirabeau's to the cases published in the following year, pending the suit in preparation between the Count and Countess of Mirabeau.

which Sombarde's prevarication deserves; this man, for the purpose of crushing me, having concealed his relationship to the Marquis of Monnier. I know what people here think of this production, or rather what they say of it. But what is your opinion? Do you think it the work of a man discouraged, of a combatant upon his last legs, who requires the assistance necessary to his weakness?"

He also continued to oppose the negociation with which his father wanted to bring the matter to a conclusion.

"I am writing to my father, and I must believe myself well supported in principle, and quite free from reproach, to write as I am doing. You may well suppose that I know what to think of the statements I have published, and the epithets that may be applied to them. The best informed advocates have told me not less than a hundred times, that my cause had been defended in a very superior manner * * *.

"I have told my father, and I repeat to you that no one, before God and man, has a right to interfere in my cause, against my will, contrary to my own opinion, and without my own consent. In this firm conviction, I tell you that I will have no compromise, unless the proceedings are set aside. I will sign none which does not include my unqualified absolution, that of Madame de Monnier, the restitution of her dower, an annuity settled on her for life, and the payment by the opposite

party of all my expenses in this suit. Lastly, I reserve to myself the free right of action against Sombarde; that of printing and placarding the decree setting aside the judgment, and a guarantee against any subsequent prosecution by the law officers of the crown*."

The Marquis, on the other hand, had very different intentions.

"I have already informed you," he wrote, "of Du Saillant's departure. The gentleman at the other place there, pretends that his plan is spoiled and that he is very angry. He will, perhaps, be so in earnest, for his brother-in law's plan and instructions are to do, in my name and his own, quite the reverse of what has been done hitherto. His third publication, whilst it seeks to excuse, is more haughty and insulting than the two former. The fellow has placed his foot upon the heels of every other person; and in truth, as M. de St. Mauris, and M. Petit†, are both military men,

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* Letters from Mirabeau to M. du Saillant, dated June 6th 1782. Vitry's collection, page 238, *et seq.* We must here call to the reader's attention, without repeating it, a letter to Boucher, dated October 5th 1779, which we have already quoted, proving how long before the present period, Mirabeau had come to this determination, in which he persevered with so much constancy and courage.

† M. de St. Mauris, commandant of the castle, and M. Petit, formerly in the body guard, and a knight of St. Louis, were severely commented upon in the second and third Cases, because the former had intrigued pretty openly, and from hatred given up as written evidence, a letter which Mirabeau had formerly sent through a

I know not what they would do to him, if he were once released *. As for the gentleman himself, he is a walking dreamer, speaking like a book, determined to have everything but leaving nothing; taking everything, but seizing nothing; is neither himself nor another, but a firebrand, a faggot, a sky-rocket, a shadow, a madman, noise, wind, a puff, and nothing more †. He is the magpie of wits, and the joy of public places. He has discernment, nevertheless, by means of which, when he finds every thing good, he feeds upon it in preference. He is an incredible tool ‡."

Unfortunately, the prejudices of the Marquis again reached the Bailli.

" This unhappy madman, in the end, will have done nothing but make pap for the devil. He has sent me a printed Case, which, for insolence and vapouring, is the most extraordinary thing I ever read; and, to tell

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faithless emissary to Madame de Monnier; and the latter had made an obscene and lying deposition very injurious to the two accused parties. St. Mauris and Petit had announced plans of vengeance to be carried into execution the moment the prisoner was released.

" And ought I to spare a St. Mauris and a Petit, when to the most glaring perjury they add the most atrocious threats, the most furious insults?"—*Third case for Counsel's opinion, &c., page* 35.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 17th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 21st 1782.

you the truth, if he saves his head in this business, I am alarmed at the thoughts of the race that such a man would beget. I candidly tell you, that if I had to do with him, I would, if possible, assist him out of this scrape only to shut him up once more at Vincennes for life; for if age and the different inflictions he has undergone, cannot change him, there is no hope left *."

Such language from the Bailli is no doubt singular; but the impressions that led to such bitterness, being founded upon passing prejudice, and not upon inveterate aversion, he altered his opinion the moment he was better informed.

We continue to extract from his letters, even though we anticipate dates, because these letters appear to give the true character of Mirabeau's situation and defence.

" He has spoken from his prison with an energy which, I confess appears insolent, but it is because people will no longer allow of energy except against the Holy Trinity. Besides, he attacked those vile law nobles, who are as perverse as they are stupid †, which is saying

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 10th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 12th 1782. The Marquis of Mirabeau's evidence also proves the partiality of the officers of justice, and he relates, concerning one of the principal, an anecdote which we here insert.

" This Procureur-general is so vindictive, and at the same time so stupid and ignorant, that no one dared to trust him by letters of recommendation. I am told that he once demanded a decree

a great deal, and whose imprudent partiality would have brought a cooler head than his to the block. Then again, with reference to the principal business which is here (in Provence), it is well that he carried it with so high a hand towards his adversaries, because he thereby showed that he had laid down the law to them, and not entered into a mean compromise, for money, as they try to persuade people here *. As for the gentleman's head, be assured that he defended it

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against the players, because in the piece called 'Le Festin de Pierre,' they had a capon served up in the play, on a day when meat was prohibited."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 6th* 1782.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782. A few days previously, Mirabeau had expressed the same thing.

"Be assured that I saw further than any body, and best understood my true interests when, at Pontarlier, I said: 'The more energy, and even audacity I show in defending myself in this business, the more I shall diminish the difficulties in Provence.' For, in fact, who will dare to assert judicially, that I was not in the right three times over, in this prosecution, in which I so sifted both the adverse party and the judges, and where nevertheless I dictated the law?"—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 17th* 1782.

Vitry, to whom Mirabeau, by the same post, wrote the very same things often expressed in the same terms, has inserted the passage in his collection, page 283. We must also add that subsequently Mirabeau took care, as he had prepared to do, to plume himself upon the tone of his defence in Franche-Comté. Accordingly, in Provence, people said: 'he pursued with, perhaps, unexampled energy, accuser, counsel, witnesses, procedure, and first judges."—*Observations for the Count of Mirabeau, &c.*, p. 33.

well, for the passions of his adversaries had led them into such a scrape, that they would have found great difficulty in getting out of it, if the compromise had not come to their assistance; having sprung from the dunghill, thanks to Du Saillant, like a pumpkin or a farmer general of the revenue*. I perceive that passion had sufficiently blinded his adversaries to make them take bad measures, whilst he took good ones. What would you have him do? Was it right that he should supplicate persons who had not the shadow of a personal grievance to complain of, but whom sordid interest led to desire his ruin, and that of his co-accused? Was he to desert his appeal, when he was certain that no legal evidence could be produced against him?—when he was assured of the illegality of the proceedings which had been conducted by a relation within the prohibited degree? Believe me, I have talked of this affair with every body here, and nobody thinks as you do, that 'this man will again come hither to present to us the brow of final impenitence, and will never return to good!'"

Such was the Bailli's language; but the Marquis did not change his. Let us turn to his letters.

"He who would make him prudent would render

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 23rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 30th 1782.

him stupid; but he is not likely to be either. Passions—he has none, nor has he a tendency to any; pretensions—he has them all, because pride is his very life, and is as natural to him as his head or his arm; but all is in infancy with him, and he has the parts of a fool *." He is a rogue and a liar from habit and by nature; but these are the weapons of weakness, as the claw is the weapon of the cat. He is presumptuous, because he never aims straight, nor is he able to aim straight, because pride and weakness cannot form a right angle. Put all this together, and embroider it with eloquence, facility, perspicuity—with every thing, in short, that dazzles the multitude, who walk upon the all-fours of their good sense, but stand gaping when raised upon two legs †. All sensible people perceive that he is mad; but they hold their tongue, and stand on one side to let him pass, because they think him dangerous; and on all occasions, he does nothing but display madness and folly, like a clock, which, when taken to pieces, does not know what it makes nor what it strikes ‡.

" Let us first establish that a man's nature cannot be changed. But this is no embarrassment to that man,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 18th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 23rd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 27th 1782.

for he has no nature. He has a sort of turbulent sensibility which renders him good, and not bad; though, at bottom, he has no goodness, not even towards himself—for he treats himself like a dog or a horse. However, he perhaps requires to knock himself about in this manner, lest his sanguineous exuberance should suffocate him. And let us be just; there are, in his errings, a great deal of physical impulse*. He writes what he pleases, and, perhaps, thinks some part of what he writes. To respect nothing is a sure weapon, for everybody makes way for him †."

" He is always the same, in turbulent uneasiness, and complete nullity; for he is but a fog—he is Ixion copulating with a cloud—he is noise, and wind, and nothing ‡.

" It is always the same thing. All that he says is false—all that he sees, illusory—all that he writes, stolen. With reference to the latter defect, his unhappy propensity injures him, for he can write a letter very well, and with inconceivable rapidity, whereas what he steals is not half so good §."

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 1st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 12th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 20th 1782.

We must admit that, among so many observations, partly true and partly false, thrown out from mere impulse by the fickle and instantly impressible mind of the Marquis, this last sally is strikingly correct; for it is true, that Mirabeau, who knew, and could do more than any other man, was too often inclined to borrow from others, instead of writing from his own thoughts, and to prepare and embellish the labour of others upon subjects which he would have handled much better without any assistance. We shall show in another part of this work the real claims of those pretended auxiliaries, who have boasted of being the architects of Mirabeau's fame, and not one of whom, after his death, could find talent enough to bring himself into notice.

Whilst the Marquis was thus firing his squibs against his son, the Pontarlier business drew towards a close.

" Du Saillant finds every thing easy for the compromise, having taken very strong letters with him; but there are still two individuals to overcome, Madame de Valdahon, and Honoré. The latter writes to me in an insolent style, but with a degree of respect, as you foolishly call it, that would put you in a towering passion. I shall not answer his letter, and all is said. If he holds out, I shall give him up. But what can be done with him?—for Linguet is free, and De Sade about to become so †."

* Linguet had been confined for some time in the Bastile, when he was liberated in 1782, and exiled to Rhetel. De Sade was then

The compromise was at length agreed to.

" Du Saillant, with the signatures attached on his side, immediately set out for Dijon, whence he brought back with him the President de Ruffey and his son *."

Further, the mediator's opinion had become more favourable to Mirabeau's line of conduct.

" Your husband will tell you, whether, according to his conscientious belief, the case could have been better defended; whether his opinion of it has not greatly changed since he has inspected it closer; and whether I am as mad as cowards, cheats and fools do not cease assuring my father that I am. I refer you to your husband's veracity, and he was not a little prejudiced †."

This impression upon Du Saillant appears at last to have reached his father-in-law ; for after writing on the 17th of June: " He will ruin himself; Providence is leading him to his punishment, and he will belie Du Saillant. The most fortunate thing that could happen

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at the donjon of Vincennes, whence he was removed to the Bastile. He did not obtain his release till 1790. Let us here observe, that this is the third time the Marquis of Mirabeau draws a parallel between his son and De Sade.—In the Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 3, and vol. iii. pp. 113, 403, and 409, the reader may see what Mirabeau, who assuredly had no knowledge of his father's parallel, said of the Marquis de Sade.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 21st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 20th 1782.

indeed to him would be to make him pass for a man stricken with mental aberration, as he is *;" he wrote to his brother two days after:

"Your nephew yielded with a good grace. You have no idea of the power of this man when he is in presence; for I am well informed, and I know it is generally supposed that, with all his folly, he would have brought about a compromise without the assistance of Du Saillant, and perhaps—it is said, certainly—upon much more advantageous terms †. And in fact, it is very possible that those devilish Cases ‡ have opened for him the trench in which this affair will be buried, and that they will be of use to him elsewhere."

This, no doubt, is a strong admission from the Marquis; and it proves what the Bailli had already perceived, that Mirabeau, independently of the suggestions of his ardent mind, arising from the bitter feelings produced by an exaggerated and atrocious condemnation, by the wants of his defence, and the interests of his co-accused, had looked forward to an

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 17th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 19th 1782.

‡ At a later period Mirabeau, who had often occasion to refer to those Cases, speaks thus:—

"Those Cases, which brought me many adherents and made me many enemies, drew upon me much censure and much praise, and placed before me many obstacles and many resources."—*Third Case for Counsel's opinion, &c.* p. 8.

ulterior object, and given his voice a power which made it reach Provence. Thus ten months subsequently, he exclaimed before the judges at Aix—

"I agreed to a compromise, but not until my enemies begged for mercy. If you have any doubts, read these Cases, then too celebrated *, which I was forced to publish in my defence. Examine the registers and archives of the courts of justice, search the reports of public trials, and try to find an accused who defended himself with the same energy! Read, and then say, if you dare, that entreaty and pity made my accuser withdraw his charge. I entered into a compromise——and why should I not? What had I to claim from my adverse party? Nothing but pecuniary damages;—and do you think that so sordid a motive could have induced me to prolong his torments and my own?—to prolong so scandalous a suit—so deplorable a public scandal †?"

Although, as we have just shown, the Marquis dismissed the prejudices he had conceived against a too bold system of defence, his heart was not softened towards his son, who was now afflicted and embarrassed by fresh severities.

"I have received an epistle from the gentleman; he begs I will become answerable for the sums advanced for him by his friends, who, as Du Saillant informs me,

* Letter already quoted, dated February 25th and December 3d 1782.

† Pleading pronounced by the Count of Mirabeau at the Audience of the Lieutenant-General, &c. March 20th 1783.

are very honest people, and have stripped themselves to assist him. I have replied, as you may imagine upon every point. I tell him I have no doubt that with my security he would yet make many points; but that it is good only because I have lived sixty-seven years as an honest man and am resolved to die such; that consequently I have no wish to mingle my engagements with his *."

The reader may judge of the remainder of this letter by what Mirabeau says of it.

" You will see, my dear sister, by my letter to my father, that I am far, very far, from being able to assent to the favourable prognostics which your kind heart sends me. Mine is lacerated and its wound will never close. My father's hatred and contempt are at length evident: he shows them in their nakedness. His contempt is perhaps forced, but in that case his hatred is only the more violent. He wants to make those who will not betray my cause, ashamed of loving me. He has decided that no one can be my friend without roguery or folly. He confesses that he expects and wishes I shall entirely lose my uncle's regard, that I may the sooner be crushed. He announces my proscription for at least seven years, protests that he will never raise the interdict against me, and declares that he will make his will in consequence. At the present time, to hasten my ruin and prevent my obtaining

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 13th 1782.

success and acquiring reputation, he does all in his power to make me quit this place as a bankrupt, and refuses me even the smallest pecuniary assistance. I have neither income, nor appointment, nor charge, nor resources, and I have already disbursed 4,800 francs upon the future and uncertain price of my labours in prison. What can and ought I to do, except to forestall his decree and his prophesy by banishing myself for ever from my family and my country? Such resolutions are not made and executed without the heart breaking. . . . I cannot escape my destiny. . . . . Fear nothing however for my first feelings. I have consulted my uncle; this was my duty, and I greatly required it, for, I confess, I am unable at this moment to reflect or even to think *."

After considerable delay, the necessary consent and signatures were obtained. We shall not dwell upon this fact, nor upon that of the compromise itself, the text of the deed, and the commentary upon it being quite useless here: because the text is nothing but a development of the conditions imperatively demanded by Mirabeau †, and which we have already given; and

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 16th 1782.

† That is to say—the sentence of the 10th of May 1778 was quashed. The Marquis and Marchioness of Monnier were separated from bed, and board, and in property; the dower of the latter was returned and a further life annuity of twelve thousand francs secured to her,—but on express condition that she should reside in a convent until her husband's demise. The Marquis of Monnier died eight months after this termination of the suit. Peuchet has

because the commentary offers no interest, and we shall have occasion to say a few words about the morality of the transaction, when we give the particulars of the suit for a separation carried on at Aix, in which an attempt was made to take advantage of the result of the proceedings at Pontarlier.

The transaction was definitively concluded August 14th 1782; "not without difficulty, as the tempers of all parties had been irritated *, and the attorneys, in despair at seeing their prey escape, attempted to throw oil upon the fire †. However, on the 14th all was terminated, and the wheel broken ‡. The Count writes to me that he is at length released after a captivity of more than six months, and that he remained, during

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given the text of the deed of compromise vol. ii. pp. 113, 114, 115, and 116. In commenting upon it, the author, in page 112, repeats, it is impossible to tell why, the libels which have most calumniated Mirabeau. On the other hand, Cadet Gassicourt says, p. 27 of the first edition and 21 of the second—

"The public prosecutor was silent, M. de Monnier paid the costs and *damages*, and Mirabeau, *in quiet possession of his mistress, whom the same instrument restored to freedom*, laughed with her at the clemency of injured husbands."

Here is a biographer truly well informed of the particulars of the life he is writing ! ! !

* The reader may see in the letter inserted in Vitry's collection page 249, and which was written by Mirabeau, August 10th, 1782, that his patience, put to so severe a test, was about to fail him.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 17th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 20th 1782.

four days, running about the streets of Pontarlier, and appearing every where, in order to shew St. Mauris, and Petit, and anybody else who might wish to speak to him, that they might easily find him, and that he was quite ready to grant them an audience. He adds that he is going to Neufchâtel, but will remain in Switzerland no longer than the time strictly necessary to secure the repayment of the sums which his friends Bourier, and especially Michaud, have advanced to meet his expenses."

The Marquis of Mirabeau continued to refuse his son all pecuniary assistance. Mirabeau was in despair at this refusal, because it compelled him to fail in the duties imposed by delicacy and gratitude. He had no confidant but his sister, who was unable to assist him.

"Your brother will not be quite unhappy so long as he is sure that he retains a place in your affections. Alas! it will soon be the only one he has left, and he would deem himself fortunate if his name were erased from the book of life *."

His discouragement also appeared in another letter which he wrote to his sister, dated August 16th.

"Here I am free! . . . But what can I do with my freedom? Rejected by my father—forgotten, perhaps hated by my mother, because I attempted to serve her —dreaded by my uncle—waited for by my creditors,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 22nd 1782.

not one of whom has been paid, although I was deprived of all I had in the world, under pretence of satisfying them—threatened by my wife, or by those who direct her—destitute of everything—having neither income, nor profession, nor credit..... Ah! God grant that my enemies may not be so cowardly as they are perverse—that they will realise my hopes—that they will come upon the green sward where I am prepared to meet them!... But, dear sister, they will not come..... If I went to fetch them, I should be called a bully,—perhaps, a murderer! And yet I am sadly in want of being run through the body *."

A few days after writing the above, he informed his uncle that "he was desirous a pension should be settled upon him, and he would leave France never to return †. He even added that he would take another name if you wished it ‡."

"If this man will really make up his mind to leave the kingdom, in truth it will be doing us a great service; for he will never be good for anything §."

All this did not move the Marquis.

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* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 16th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 26th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 7th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 10th 1782.

"He has written the same thing to me, on the subject of his residing with a pension in a corner. But these are crotchets that really whirl through his brain, or which he affects. Neither he nor others can be aware of what passes by puffs in that enormous waste; and the most dangerous part of it is that he assumes that fire of temper, as often as he feels it in reality *."

Soon afterwards, the Marquis became of a different opinion. He interpreted, in his own way, Mirabeau's lengthened stay at Neufchâtel, where he was in treaty for the sale of his manuscripts.

"I think you are freed from the burthen imposed upon you by yourself and me,—by yourself from goodness of heart, by me from duty and the perplexity I should have been in, no doubt, in a month or two, to fix a place of residence for that wretch, and thereby supply him with materials for a new manifest, and a fresh catastrophe. This man will surely not proceed to Provence. He is weary of undergoing humiliation, by the traces he has left of his money debts, actions, gestures, and behaviour; or Providence will not allow the malefactor to enjoy his condition in life, as if he had never been guilty."

The Marquis was, however, mistaken. His son, yielding to the exhortations of a sensible and affec-

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 3rd 1782.

tionate sister, had given up the idea of quitting his native country; and, after settling his affairs at Neufchâtel, and terminating some political writings which we shall have occasion to notice hereafter, he set out for Provence, October 3rd 1782.

Thus, after a lapse of seven years, terminated the fatal episode of the loves of Mirabeau and Sophie. The development has proved the more difficult and painful to us, because it was impossible we could have passed over the circumstance without notice. Although it was our wish to limit the details as much as possible, we were, nevertheless, compelled to state every particular calculated, according to our plan, our duty, and our conviction, to place in their true light the facts as well as the persons connected therewith.

We have given our whole attention to presenting this narrative in such a form as would satisfy the legitimate exigences of history; but, as much as possible, without any concession to the whims of that mischievous curiosity which other writers have flattered. Far from imitating them, we have excluded from our account all that does not necessarily belong to it. For instance, we have limited to a few indispensable statements all that relates to one of the parties the most implicated in the correspondence from Vincennes: we allude to Mirabeau's youngest sister. Not only have we not condescended to refute, but we have not even mentioned the suppositions equally infamous and false

which a biographer as unjust as he is shameless *, has presumed to make with reference to Madame de Cabris. The exposure of the groundlessness of these abominable insinuations would have been to us an easy task; but it would also have proved an occasion for reviving unnecessary and scandalous particulars;—though, by making such exposure, we could have shown, in the interest of Mirabeau, that among the external causes of his wanderings, was the influence which this sister exercised over him. We could also have explained the errors and misfortunes of the latter by her physical and moral constitution — by her bad education—by her imprudently precocious marriage to a man very inferior to herself in intellect, and who, early in life, became afflicted with incurable madness—and by her subsequent connexion with a villain..... But to what good would such explanations tend?— what advantage could be derived from them? Does history owe such disclosures to that frivolous or immoral curiosity to which they serve as mere amusement? If the life of Madame de Cabris was very tempestuous, there is no forced necessity for her name being registered in the pages of history. The reading public has scarcely noticed the secondary part assigned to her in some obscure and by no means authentic passages of Manuel's collection, in some pamphlets, and in a certain discredited work †. Madame de Cabris, in her

* Peuchet, vol. I.

† We here allude to the four volumes by Peuchet, and we speak

riper age, made atonement for the faults of her youth. Restored to her natural feelings, she showed herself, in the decline of life, as admirable by her virtue, as by the prodigious faculties of her mind. We have, ourselves, had an opportunity of venerating in her the model of the most affecting domestic virtue. We saw her, long before she had reached old age, quit this life *, exhausted by the care and attention which she had bestowed upon the only person who had a right to reproach her—upon a husband who had become poor and infirm, and whose madness, for a long period peaceful, had assumed a character of peevishness and often violence. Such was Madame de Cabris after her moral regeneration, and it is only in this new character that we shall hereafter present her to our readers.

Having reached a period which, though still far from the close of our work, brings us to the end of one of its natural divisions, we here terminate that division, by relating what still remains to be told, concerning a subject which will not again be alluded to in the sequel of our narrative.

It has been asserted by many writers, that immediately after Mirabeau quitted the donjon of Vincennes,

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of the work in such harsh terms, because public contempt has done justice to this compilation full of repetitions without a single novelty. To increase his text with quotations, Peuchet has copied all the particulars concerning Madame de Cabris, to be found in the Vincennes collection. But few readers will look for them in this work, untrue in every part, and often heavy and tedious.

* August 16th 1807. She was born September 4th 1752.

he basely deserted the unhappy Sophie, who, a year after, died a victim to this monstrous ingratitude, and received her death-blow in some degree, from the hand of a man for whom, in her heroic self-denial, she had sacrificed everything.

By the blessing of God we can disprove this assertion, which, if its untruth had not appeared evident to us, would have induced us to give up our task as Mirabeau's biographer, or rather would have prevented us from ever undertaking it. The following, instead of a calumnious romance, is the complete and exact truth, now published for the first time, of the circumstances which brought about and succeeded the breaking off of all connexion between Madame de Monnier and Mirabeau.

After the two first years of Madame de Monnier's residence at the convent of the Saintes-Claires, at Gien, whither she was conducted June 18th 1777, some relaxation took place of the rigour of her confinement. Several of the most respectable inhabitants of the town, were at times allowed to visit her in her cell; and it appears by the letters from the donjon of Vincennes *, that one of these individuals† aroused that extreme jealousy peculiar to Mirabeau's character. This is attested by numerous witnesses, and more especially

* Vol. I, p. 29; Vol. III. pp. 314, 329, 336, 373, 384, and 437.

† M. de Rancourt, who died at Gien in 1832.

by Mirabeau himself, in a great number of letters, some of them published.

Notwithstanding his imperative remonstrances, and his very explicit prohibitions, Sophie continued to receive M. de Rancourt's visits, and some others, of which she said nothing in her letters. These had certainly become cold and constrained. This silence concerning her visiters was made known, and perhaps exaggerated to Mirabeau by the persons through whose hands the secret correspondence between the lovers was conveyed backwards and forwards, between Gien and Vincennes.

Father Claude Maillet, a Franciscan priest, a sort of spiritual director (Mirabeau says, 'a sultan-monk*') attached to the convent of Saintes-Claires, and residing in the establishment, paid great attention to Madame de Monnier, and inspired her with friendship; and in the hope of being employed at court as a preacher, through the supposed interest of Mirabeau, Father Maillet obtained from Sophie, a strong recommendation to her lover, which was received the more angrily by the latter from being the more pressing. Some time after this, Father de Tellier, a Minim, a priest remarkable by his youth, the beauty of his person, and his eloquence in the pulpit, began to frequent the convent, and being well received by Madame de Monnier, the Franciscan conceived the greatest jealousy of him, and denounced him to the abbess, who, on account of

* Original letters from Vincennes, Vol. III. p. 435.

the Minim's order, and also of his extreme modesty and reserve, did not think proper to notice an accusation, which being dictated by interested motives, was on that very account to be looked at with suspicion. This rivalry between the two priests made a noise within the convent and without, and again officious reports were forwarded to Mirabeau. The correspondence so long full of passion, but which for several months had been languishing on both sides, now assumed quite a new character. Mirabeau wrote violent letters, the replies were bitter, and Sophie, deeply offended, fancying that under an assumed fit of jealousy, Mirabeau sought a rupture, was giving way to despair, when a mutual friend offered to bring about a verbal explanation, far preferable to letters, in which anger on both sides had succeeded to pettishness, and direct accusation to timid insinuations and mild reproaches.

This mutual friend was Dr. Ysabeau *, the convent physician, who, in imitation, and after the death of his father, had lavished all that the most skilful art and the most tender humanity could suggest upon the unhappy boarder, whose health and mind were equally affected. Compassionate, calm, and prudent, like the good angel of Vincennes, and equally disposed to serve the prisoners, he had become Sophie's zealous friend and unsuspected confidant. He wrote to Mirabeau,

* He is mentioned in the letters from Vincennes, by the initials Y—, Y. S—, by the word Ysab., and often by name.

then at Bignon, and who had been there for some days past. The liberated captive secretly set out during the night of the 3rd of July 1781, and rode to Nogent-sur-Vernisson, which was only three leagues from Gien. Here he found Dr. Ysabeau, who conducted him privately to a summer-house in an isolated garden, situated out of the town of Gien. In this place Mirabeau assumed the dress of a pedlar, and under this disguise was introduced into the convent by the doctor, and a nun whom, with Sophie's consent, he had let into the secret, in order to have a witness in case of accident or indiscretion. All three reached Sophie's cell without obstacle*. A long conference took place between Mirabeau and Sophie, in the presence of the physician and the nun, neither of whom withdrew a single moment. Mirabeau angrily made assertions without being sure they were well founded; Sophie defended herself with energy, and was at last provoked to vehement recrimination; for she had likewise received secret intelligence, and probably

* This is the whole truth concerning this interview, about which so many misstatements have been made. Instances of this may be found in Cadet-Gassicourt's Work, page 26, of the first edition, and page 21 of second, and in the article "Mirabeau" in the "Biographie Nouvelle des Contemporains," by Messrs. Arnault, Jay, Jouy, Norvens, &c. Vol. XIII. p. 351. Accustomed to give evidence of what we assert, we applied to the venerable Dr. Ysabeau, who is still alive, and obtained from him a written statement under his own hand, which remains in our possession, and from which our account is faithfully copied.

proofs. The anger, on both sides, passed all reasonable bounds. The lovers separated under feelings of great irritation; and Sophie was the more offended, because she really had not given Mirabeau any ground of complaint; at least such is our own conviction from the information afforded us on the spot by the venerable Dr. Ysabeau, and by the nun who was present, sister Louise, still alive (1831) and still attached, at eighty-two years of age, to the same house, now the hospital of the town of Gien.

From this period, all intercourse between them, whether personal or by letter, was irrevocably broken off. Sophie remained deeply afflicted, she fell ill, her eyes inflamed by tears and want of sleep, were several times stricken with ophthalmia; but time and care restored her to health. This single fact is sufficient to prove that a coolness existed between the lovers prior to the rupture, which would have proved a death-blow to Sophie, if her feelings had remained such as by her former letters we have shown them to have been, when she talked of *suicide*, every time she experienced deep and profound affliction connected with her attachment to Mirabeau.

In March 1783, Madame de Monnier obtained an almost entire freedom. This occurred after the death of her husband *, whose name she had ceased to bear

* In a register of the royal orders for detention, deposited at the

ever since 1776. At Gien she was known as Madame de Malleroy. Her family now pressed her to return to Dijon; but her mother being dead (she died April 18th 1783*), and Madame de Monnier dreading the censure and contempt of her other relations, virtuous as her mother, but much more austere†, resolved to remain with the kind-hearted nuns who had consoled her. She occupied a small house belonging to them, and prepared for her accommodation by the kindness of Dr. Ysabeau. It communicated with the convent by a door, but had a separate entrance from the street.

Préfecture de Police, it is stated that Madame de Monnier was *liberated January* 31*st* 1784.

* M. de Ruffey outlived his respectable wife eleven years. He died September 10th 1794. His eldest son, Frederick Henry Richard de Ruffey, Chamber President in the Burgundy Parliament, was condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal, and beheaded April 10th 1794. His second son, Charles Richard de Ruffey, Count of Vesvarotte, formerly President of the Chamber of Accounts at Dijon, and whom we shall presently again have occasion to mention, is still alive (1831).

† We have before us a letter dated June 18th 1780, in which Madame de Monnier announces this determination.

"Madame de V. (Villiers) asked me whether, when my business was settled, I would live with my mother; I replied in the negative, whatever might occur; that I should prefer spending my life in a convent on account of the past. Those who know my family will easily understand my motives."

The well-known fact of Madame de Monnier's persevering in her determination to remain at Gien, where she died, has not prevented Peuchet from writing at all risks, as he frequently does.

"She sought in the society of her family, a happiness which for a long time had been unknown to her." Vol. II. p. 333.

Madame de Monnier, who was allowed by her family an annual pension of three thousand francs, paid the nuns a stipulated annual sum for her board and lodging, and continued to receive the services of sister Louise, whom the situation of the house allowed to give them without violating her vows.

In a short time, Madame de Monnier, taking advantage of the freedom she enjoyed, formed a society of several persons attracted to her house by the graces of her person and manners, and the deserved reputation of amiability, gentleness and benevolence which she had acquired. She also accepted invitations which came to her from all quarters, and visited the principal families in the town. She further made excursions into the country, and would reside for several weeks at a time in the different chateaux in the neighbourhood, those, for instance, of Beauvoir, Malartic, Dampierre, Dominus, and Thou, belonging to the families of Foudras, Varville, de Villiers, and Poterat.

Having got rid of the Franciscan and the Minim, whose rejected pretensions and imaginary rivalry had, in some degree, committed her, she became an object of assiduous attention to an officer of the Maréchaussée, named Lecuyer, not at all deficient in intellect or valour, and enjoying a certain degree of esteem, but a man of violent temper which, though long restrained by a wish to please, burst forth in all its violence, the moment he had won Madame de Monnier's confidence and

affection. This intimacy, which did not last long, was checkered with uneasiness, anxiety and quarrels; and Sophie was far from finding in it that happiness of which she seemed always in search, but could never attain.

After a time, however, she thought she had reached it. In her intercourse with society, she became acquainted with a retired captain of cavalry, a widower of thirty-five, whose late wife was of the Rancourt family, a member of which had formerly awakened Mirabeau's jealousy *. M. Edme Benoit de Poterat often met Madame de Monnier in the best society at Gien, and in the neighbouring chateaux. A conformity of opinions and tastes, a mutual habit of melancholy, the communication to each other of their respective misfortunes, and even their mutual anxiety for each other's health, which in each had been affected by mental and bodily suffering:—all these things tended to unite them by a bond of tender sympathy, which soon ripened into a warmer feeling. Sophie, enlightened by experience, endeavoured, but ineffectually, to resist this *penchant*.

The lovers were mutually captivated; and both being free, they determined to marry—a plan justified by their respective ages, their attachment to each other, and their condition in life. Madame de Monnier visited her friend several times at his estate of Thou, where her presence was authorised by that of the proprietor's

* Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, Vol. I. p. 29; Vol. III. pp. 314, 329, 336, 373, 384, and 437.

sister and a niece, both very amiable persons. But these being called away by family duties, were forced to leave the chateau, and the increasing ill health of M. de Poterat forced him to quit the country whither Madame de Monnier could no longer visit him. He therefore fixed his residence at Gien close to hers, and received from her the most anxious and tender attentions. All her care, however, could not overcome the slow but incurable consumption with which he was attacked, and she soon acquired the painful conviction that her friend had only a short time to live.

From this period her resolution was evidently taken. She had always kept up a close intimacy with the excellent Dr. Ysabeau and his kind wife, who was the sincerest and most useful of Madame de Monnier's friends. She replied to their kind soothings with a well calculated mixture of grief and apparent resignation. She told them that being too much accustomed to suffer, and having succeeded in surmounting afflictions such as can be felt only once in the course of a life, she should not allow herself to be overcome by the less affliction, painful as it was, with which she was threatened. She spoke calmly of distant projects, and then turned the conversation upon a recent occurrence much talked of in the town, and connected with a young sempstress, whose imprudence had endangered her life. Madame Monnier inquired without affectation * about the effects

* A singular coincidence appears in a letter dated March 20th 1779, from Madame de Ruffey to her daughter.

of suffocation from charred wood. She asked whether death necessarily ensued. The doctor replied that when the suffocation was gradual and incomplete, instances had been known of persons saved by the instinctive effect of introducing air into the room by opening a window, or even by breaking a pane of glass. She well noted this information, spoke very freely on other topics, and then took her leave.

Meanwhile, M. de Poterat's complaint was fast approaching its term, and no hope remaining, Madame de Monnier's grief, and the situation in which she would be left by his death, awakened the sympathy of every one, and brought her numerous visiters. Among others, was a thoughtless woman, the wife of a counsellor elect, who tortured the unfortunate Sophie with her consolation and advice. One day this lady represented to her the situation in which M. de Poterat's death would soon place the woman who had linked her fate with his; the effect which would be produced upon public opinion by an intimate connection, the consequences of which could no longer be legalised by marriage; the disgrace and desertion which would ensue; lastly, the necessity of quitting Gien and returning to Dijon. Madame de Monnier listened to all this without the least visible sign of emotion, and made no reply.

Two days after this conversation, on the 8th of Sep-

"You have risked your life by using charred wood; sometimes it kills, sometimes it produces accidents resembling death, without being so, but which cause people to be buried alive. Never use it, I entreat you."

tember, 1789, a short time before day-break, M. de Poterat breathed his last in Sophie's arms. On this event being communicated to Dr. and Madame Ysabeau, they immediately hastened to M. de Poterat's house, and forcibly withdrew Sophie from the body which she held in her embrace. They led her home, and entreated her to come and reside with them, never more to separate from them. She replied with tears to their kind intreaties, and in order not to accompany them immediately, she pretended to have some domestic arrangements which required that she should be alone for one whole day, after which she would remove to their house and quit it no more. She agreed that the doctor should come and fetch her the next morning at nine o'clock, on his return from a patient whom he was to visit at Briare, a neighbouring town, and to leave home for this purpose at a very early hour.

After the departure of Dr. Ysabeau and his wife, she called sister Louise, and her servant boy, and informed them that she was going on the morrow to visit a friend with whom she should spend the day. She then dismissed them after giving her orders for the next morning. Being now alone, she collected her papers, tied them in bundles, sealed them, wrote a letter containing her last instructions, and then entered a small closet, the smallness and closeness of which she considered suited to the design she had long since resolved to carry into execution. She then closed and carefully caulked

the door and the window. Two chafing-dishes full of charcoal which she had just lighted were then placed by her, one on each side of the arm-chair upon which she seated herself. In order to prevent her purpose from being counteracted by any instinctive effort of nature, she bound her two legs first under, then above her clothes. She then tied one of her arms to the arm-chair; and afterwards fixed the other arm with a ligature prepared beforehand, and then fastened with her teeth. In this position she calmly awaited death.

On the 9th of September, at six o'clock in the morning, the serving-boy, according to the instructions his mistress had given him the day before, went to take her orders about her departure. Having entered the principal room, he perceived that Madame de Monnier had not been in bed all night. He spoke, but received no reply: he then attempted to open the closet, the unusual fastening of which alarmed him. Having, at length, broken a pane of the closet window, he perceived his mistress without motion, and apparently deprived of life. His shouts for assistance brought the neighbours into the house. The fatal news soon spread through the little town of Gien, where Madame de Monnier was very much beloved. Notice was also given to the authorities, and M. Bousseau, Procureur du Roi of the Bailliage, proceeded to the house,

attended by a surgeon. The closet door was then forced open, and the suicide verified *."

An express was immediately sent for Dr. Ysabeau, whom the messenger met on the road, and who, as he rode full gallop towards Madame de Monnier's house, endeavoured to cheat his profound grief, by thinking of the possibility of recalling her to life, as the suffocation might, perhaps, not be complete. But, alas! when he arrived he lost all hope: the ignorant surgeon, who had attended the magistrate, had not thought of trying the most simple means of resuscitation. Full of the idea, though without any apparent reason, of the possibility of a pregnancy, he proposed to open the body, which he performed upon the spot, with the ignorant precipitancy of a barbarian. An hour after, the body had nothing left of the human form, and Dr. Ysabeau's grief was the more intense, because some remains of coloration and heat, which had existed prior to this atrocious operation, seemed to justify the hopes he had conceived before his arrival.

The letter which Madame Monnier had written the day before, containing her will and last instructions,

* Sophie was born January 9th 1753; she was therefore thirty-six years and eight months old when she died, and not "twenty-eight years of age," as Peuchet states, vol. i. p. 225; and "twenty-six years old," vol. ii. p. 334. So careful and well-informed is this writer, whom several others have copied, and among others, the gifted author of a notice inserted in vol. xxiv. of the "Revue de Paris,"—1831, No. 3, pp. 160—162, &c.

was addressed to Dr. Ysabeau. She left her papers to one of her brothers, who afterwards came to Gien and claimed them. She distributed among her friends a few little tokens of remembrance, and the remainder of her personal effects she left to some poor people, whose poverty she had secretly alleviated for several years past. This horrible event was considered a public calamity at Gien; and the following day all the inhabitants of the town formed the funeral cortège. Though forty-two years have elapsed since this event, the memory of Madame de Monnier still lives at Gien. Among the upper classes, the graces of her mind, her amiable disposition, and the mild virtues which she practised, form a theme of constant admiration. The poor still speak of her laborious charity, for she assisted them with the work of her hands, as well as with money. Her acts of benevolence have become the subject of popular tradition. On All Saints day, in 1831, we ourselves saw an old pauper, over whose head nearly a hundred winters had passed, whose eyes were dimmed, their fountains not dried up, shedding tears upon an isolated tomb in the middle of the cemetery of the camp, to which the poor old man had requested to be led, in order to pray once more, as he said, for the suffering angel, who formerly gave him aid and consolation!

Let us briefly sum up this lamentable episode. From Sophie's very infancy, her character presented

the rare combination of extraordinary energy, with the most exquisite gentleness. This latter quality, being the most apparent, concealed the former *. Nor did the family perceive the indications of excessive sensibility, which bore the germ of the most incontrollable of passions. A skilful direction would have kept this tendency in check; and a well assorted marriage would have converted the girl of strong passions into a chaste wife and an accomplished mother. Her parents, virtuous though they were, but blinded by sordid calculations, laid the foundation of her ruin, from misunderstanding her character. She was scarcely a woman ere she was united to a man seventy years of age. The most submissive and most affectionate daughter was thus made to suffer the penalty inflicted by the ancients upon parricides—that of being chained to a corpse. No other woman, even of a vulgar mind, or of a more advanced age, or with passions and feelings extinct or lukewarm, could have found happiness in such a union; for the infirm husband was harsh, jealous, miserly, a bigot, and especially vindictive. His very marriage was the strongest evidence of the latter defect. Tied

* Mirabeau expressly stated its existence to Sophie's brothers:—

"Your relations do not know Madame de Monnier, whom they have always seen moderate and gentle; they are apparently not aware that the passions of a mild woman, perhaps more difficult to be roused, are infinitely more ardent than others, and are truly inextinguishable when they once begin to burn."—*Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 392.

to such a companion, Sophie's burning passion, being without any specific object, remained smouldering in her bosom, ready to burst forth into a flame on the slightest excitement. On a sudden, in the midst of the *ennui* and solitude of a small provincial town, a man appeared, the first of an age corresponding with her own, whom Sophie had yet known. "All the stays of virtue were wanting to her * ;" and she was always surrounded by old men and priests. This man was young; he was persecuted and unhappy. Armed with the powers of seduction belonging to the most fascinating mind that ever existed, he was a most dangerous acquaintance for a young wife so situated. Seeing Sophie daily, he drank in large draughts of a passion always and every where persuasive, but which, being elevated to a unison with his prodigious faculties of intellect, derived from it supernatural eloquence. No woman could have withstood it; and in such a perilous situation, what ægis could have preserved the ardent and inexperienced Sophie? She threw herself into the seducer's arms, a virgin after five years of marriage. The excitement of exuberant youth, the hitherto unknown delight of loving and being beloved, repeated ill-usage, a rash elopement, an unexpected arrest, the torture of separation, the ephemeral happiness of

* Second Case for Counsel's opinion, in the matter of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 192 of the 8vo edition.

maternity, though she felt nothing but its sufferings, a long and rigorous imprisonment, the loss of a beloved child whom she had been allowed to see only once, a daily correspondence—and such a correspondence!—all tended, during the space of seven years, to feed this passion which seemed to increase with the sufferings it cost her. But a period at length arrived when the burning letters of this correspondence became languid and rare on both sides; and shortly afterwards, mutual suspicion, if not mutual infidelity, suddenly severed two lovers who, before, seemed to have exchanged their lives with each other. Great as was the passion that had filled Sophie's heart, that heart was not yet exhausted. After a time, she made a second choice; but fate reserved for her the only misfortune in love which she had not yet felt—the death of her lover..... Saturated, as she was with grief, and, from her very youth, caring but little for life, which she would not accept but on condition of loving, she resolved not to survive an event to which she had already looked forward before it took place. On the very day her lover died, she inflicted death upon herself.

It was, no doubt, Mirabeau, who first brought Sophie into the dangerous course which ended in self-destruction. But, let us not fear to add, that the fate of this victim of love and fatality was fixed beforehand by her natural physical and mental constitution, and the irreparable fault committed by her family in forcing her

to marry the Marquis of Monnier. Had Mirabeau never gone to Pontarlier, and Sophie had to defend her heart and senses against an ordinary man, her destiny would have been the same, and her career closed by the same catastrophe.

We may claim to be pardoned for having entered into the above particulars concerning this ill-fated woman, when it is considered that an imputation, like the one cast upon the memory of Mirabeau, must have painfully affected us, under the feelings by which we are actuated in writing this work, and which we every where acknowledge. In the present instance, we have yielded to those feelings, only because, on the one hand, our explanation is not offensive to Sophie's memory; and, on the other, because the accusation against Mirabeau, long since buried in oblivion, has been dug up again for posterity by a writer who, at the risk of committing the authority of his name and the dignity of his subject, has thought proper, on several occasions, to mix up Mirabeau's private life with matters of general history; and on the present occasion, among others, has not scrupled to disgrace his work by a calumny borrowed from the most obscure and odious libels*.

* M. Ch. Lacretelle expresses himself in the following terms:—"After his release from Vincennes he (Mirabeau) forgot that Sophie, the thought of whom had appeared to fill his whole soul, and MADAME LE MONNIER, LEFT ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE, COMMITTED SUICIDE."—*History of France during the eighteenth century.* Vol. vi., p. 9.

BOOK XII.

We have already stated that the Bailli, being acted upon by the mistrust formerly excited in his mind by the Marquis, as well as by the timidity often consequent upon old age, and the fear of failure in the plan of reconciliation between Mirabeau and his wife, consented, with great repugnance, to receive his nephew.

"I wish, I confess, that he would not come; for I cannot conceal from you that I have a singular aversion to this man, arising from his letters to me, and copies which he sent me of those he has written to you, and some other persons. In all these productions I detect the most intolerable pride, a confidence which proves that he believes only in himself, and so furious a divergence from my own notions, that I think it impossible I could ever accustom myself to his company*.

"Behold the Count rescued from the claws of St.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 5th, 1782.

Hermandad! In the letter I have received, he informs me that he is on his way hither; but as such a head as his requires something romantic and Apollonian, he says, poetically: 'I set out for the place, the access to which ought not to have been made so difficult to me.' I am waiting for him to reply, and ask him what he means by this ridiculous sentence:—for who made the access to this country so difficult to him? He has brought our name low in this place, where, formerly, and before his time, it was really respected and honoured, as having been borne by none but honest men, and at times by men who were great in their sphere.

"At length, I clearly perceive the weight of the burthen with which you are loading me; and I know not whether, being so attached as you are to what you consider your duties, you have not conceived a wrong notion upon this point; for, truly, none but a father can keep in check a man constituted as this man is. * * * *

"I have told you over and over again, that if this gentleman tires my patience, I will give up the house to him and withdraw. And you may be sure I will keep my word—for no flowers of rhetoric shall persuade me that I have a right to turn the first-born of the head of the family out of a house to which, like many younger sons, I might have been myself a stranger.

Say that you are master, as much as you please—that is very true: but you cannot delegate your authority to another.

* * * * * *

"I again repeat that it appears to me this man ought to have no other domicile than his father's house. Not having the misfortune to be his father, I have no right to take him to task. You may tell him, a thousand times over, that you transfer your authority to me, but I shall tell you the same number of times that to do so is not in your power *."

This determined resistance on the part of the Bailli for a moment checked his brother, who, considering that in order not to break it was better to bend, wrote to this effect:—

"I will not allow this man to tease you, if he fails in some obreptitious romance worthy of his skill, or in the part of Rhadamistus, for which he seems purposely to have been procreated. Alas! if you become discouraged, it will be all over with me; therefore, pray assist me even now in determining whither I shall send him to reside, the moment he becomes, in the least degree, a burthen to you. I cannot order him out of the country, because I should thereby appear to drive him from it by force. Were I to send him out of

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 12th 1782.

Provence, it would be placing him further than ever from a reconciliation with his wife, which it is our interest to bring about, and his right to obtain. Besides, he would go and commit evil, and would lay waste some other province, whilst, in yours, he is well known. I ever think that his place of residence should be as near the coast as possible, as, perhaps, the sight of the sea may tempt him to seek his fortune in the East Indies *."

Mirabeau meanwhile was on his road to Provence.

" If the gentleman has not lied, according to his praiseworthy custom, he set out on Thursday the 10th, and must have arrived by this time. He wrote to Saillanette, to beg she would recommend him to your kindness; he seems to be afraid. *Rara antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede pœna claudo.....* You must say to him: 'Sir,' or 'Nephew,' this is my house, as it is your father's. When an attempt was made to new-make, or to repair you, you were shown the door: now that you have undergone all your trials, I consent to take you in and afford you house-room, since my brother sends you to me; but I do this merely to give you time to settle your affairs, and no longer†.' "

The Bailli now patiently waited for his nephew's arrival.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 26th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 15th 1782.

" The Count is not yet arrived; perhaps he will not come at all. As your son, and because you wish him to have children, I will receive him; but I think it impossible he can regain my good opinion, because I know, even better than yourself, how well he can feign, and act what part he pleases; so that I can never place confidence in this gallant youth, even though he should do the best possible*. Your madman is almost at his journey's end. He will this day reach Tourettes, whither I have sent a carriage for him; so that I may anticipate the honour of seeing him this evening. I know not how he will like my greeting†."

Mirabeau, however, had reason to be pleased with his reception.

" My uncle did all he could to receive me coldly, but could not succeed. He had placed fusileers and speech-makers on the road to his mansion, whilst *feux de joie* blazed forth on all sides. He gave all the pomp in his power to my arrival, in order to do me honour in the province. It is true that the pleasure of the country people, when they saw me again, was not at all feigned. The fact is, I never did them any harm; and my ancestors, during three centuries, did them much good‡."

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 18th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 19th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 22nd 1782. This extract is to be found, verbatim,

This popular feeling in Mirabeau's favour, was attested by the Bailli. "What surprised me was the joy of the people here on seeing him arrive, although he is in debt to some of them *. To tell you the truth, he is much beloved here, although his debts here are great for such a place as this†. They are greatly attached to him, and I was much moved by the strong expressions to this effect uttered by some among them ‡."

But the Marquis was not so easily pleased, and replied:—

"I am not at all edified by his very jovial and clownish letter, in which he speaks of nothing but the merry-makings at the castle. You ought, I think, to have prevented these village festivities, for it is laughing both at the decree, and at his creditors §. As for the joy of the peasantry on seeing him arrive, the Egyptians uttered shouts of joy when they saw a turkey pass bearing the name of Meleager. Any man may purchase for a franc two hours of emotion at a play; and a pipe and tabor would make these peasants dance before a cat ||."

in one of the letters published by Vitry, to whom Mirabeau wrote on the same subject. See page 257 of Vitry's collection.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 8th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 12th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 16th 1782.

§ Unpublished letter from the Maquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1782.

|| Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 22nd 1782.

No sooner had Mirabeau personal access to the Bailli and could explain and defend himself *viva voce*, than he regained his uncle's affection and confidence.

" I am of opinion that your son should not see your letters, for I begin to think that people make you fancy him much worse than he really is. I am extremely well satisfied with him. * * * Allow me to tell you that if I firmly believed all you have written to me against Honoré, I would never have undertaken to receive him, and you yourself would have acted very unjustly in fixing such a charge upon me. I must tell you that for three weeks past, I have been doing my best to discover some attempt on his part to examine my papers, and I sound him a great deal without appearing to do so. Up to the present hour, I have reason to be satisfied with him, except perhaps that his looks evince a little hastiness, though not to excess, and that he tells some highly embellished stories which, however, I cannot ascertain to be untrue. In a word, I will conceal nothing from you, but I certainly shall not try to excite you against your children. Another undertook, undertakes, and will undertake that task. *Basta*, God is upon all things *. I cannot tell you otherwise than I see, but a whole month without changing or letting any thing bad be perceived by eyes, weak perhaps, but which look closely into matters, is a thing

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 8th 1782.

that appears to me difficult *. He has now been here six weeks, and I cannot but be satisfied with him. I find in him no exuberance at present, only a little exaggeration in what he relates.

" He had preserved some papers and placed them in faithful hands. Since he has been here, he has told me certain things concerning the truth of which I lately had only a very wavering faith; but these papers having been returned to him, I have seen, read, and held in my hands the clearest evidence; 1st, That his mother attempted to engage him in her party, and asked him to give her information concerning your affairs; and I have seen, read, and held in my hands the threats which two agents of that woman held out to him, also the hopes by which they sought to induce him to do what they desired. With reference to other matters, I have seen sufficient, and am sufficiently well acquainted with the hand-writings of the parties, to tell you that although he has committed many faults, he has often been more unfortunate than culpable. You know me well: I have never deceived any human being, and shall not begin with you. Be assured that often when matters have been represented to you in an unfavourable light, if the real particulars had been known to you, it would have appeared that he was merely unfortunate †."

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 23rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 30th 1782.

The Bailli's assertion with regard to the attempts made by the Marchioness of Mirabeau to engage her son on her side, was suggested by a fact which occurred only a few days before this letter was written, and which we here relate as it affords further evidence of the unjust opinion which the Marquis of Mirabeau had always entertained of his son.

" Lefebvre * told me that he had just sent from my door a packet directed in my son's hand-writing to his mother, the postage marked upon it being three livres, twelve sous. I scolded him for not having taken it in; but the thing was done and could not be helped. Now, some days ago, I received notice of an atrocious statement against me about to be published by my adverse party †. The manuscript has been seen, with corrections in a disguised hand, resembling that of the Count. This statement is loaded with precedents, and is written in a style of fury and the devil's own malice. The first pages very much resemble the gentleman's bathos. * * * * * I cannot think of this cesspool without a feeling of rage which I did not think was in me. God, who sees all things, sees the bottom of my heart, and the cruel conspiracy of these wretches to drag their only protector into the abyss. Had the Almighty given me less courage, I should have been there long ago; but by pursuing this course they will reach no other goal

* Porter of the Mirabeau hotel at Paris.

† The Marchioness of Mirabeau.

than that of all malefactors. Charlemagne and Li-Chi-Min, the two greatest men the earth has produced, had each a son who was a parricide. And who am I, that I should complain of less than that, if indeed it be less * ?"

A denial of the Marquis's unworthy suppositions was immediately sent in reply to his letter.

" I have nothing to say of your statement about Lefebvre's packet, addressed to Madame de Mirabeau, except that your son has some very kind friends near you, and that he has laid himself open to them, therefore they serve him well. I shall endeavour to sift this matter. Whilst I was writing the above he entered the room; and in the course of conversation, told me of himself, that his mother had written to him stating that she was surprised he did not make her acquainted with the result of his lawsuit, and that he had forwarded to her a copy of the deed of compromise and of the decree. This then is the history of the suspicious packet, and chance led him to mention the matter himself †."

" I was determined to return to the subject.—At the expiration of three or four days, I questioned him calmly about the respect due to his mother, asking him whether he had given her an account of the Pontarlier

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 31st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 12th 1782.

business. He showed me letters from her, taxing him bitterly with not having made her acquainted with the result of this business, reproaching him likewise, in that style in which you know she excels, with her kindness towards him, and accusing him of ingratitude in not writing to her. Thus, you have, once more, the history of your porter's packet *."

These explanations appeased the Marquis upon this point, for he said no more about it; but he did not become more favourably disposed towards his son.

"I can see you hence, going through, with the gentleman, pretty nearly the same course of ratiocination with which he amused me every morning during eight months and a half †. If the devil were to warn us a hundred and thirty-five times in an hour, it would be impossible not to be vexed at his manner of enhancing and reasoning, and the more so because being capable of perpetrating the worst as well as the best, it is all one to him, and the true or the false being absolutely the same thing to him, and the straight and the crooked likewise, I really think, God forgive me! that he believes one half. As also it is a fact I wrote to you of him, that it is impossible to preserve any thing

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 16th 1782.

† From May 20th 1781 to February 2nd 1782. Chaussard says, page 64, that Mirabeau spent *sixteen months* with his father. This is an error to be added to the many others committed by Mirabeau's biographers, because they all wrote without first obtaining the necessary information.

but the cardinal points of his story: that is to say, whether it be a voluntary lie or not—it is still a lie. My only plan on this head will be to keep you well informed. * * *

"You have written to Caroline that 'I sent him to you to get rid of him.' But I can promise you that when this business is finished he shall never more trouble you, nor me either *. I am disabused from putting my own prudence in the place of other people's opinions. I wanted to do it with those under my charge; but my Plutarch tells me, with reference to madmen, that once upon a time the moon begged its mother to make for it a little surtout that should fit its figure. 'And how can I do that?' said the mother. 'Sometimes I see you slender, sometimes round, sometimes horned, sometimes increasing, sometimes diminishing. . . . . To the devil with the attempt of clothing mad people in garments that will fit them †.'"

"But why," replied the Bailli, "do you conclude your letter with a curse upon your son? You say that he shall never embrace you again as long as he lives? Why, having pardoned, should you now reject him? What wrong has he since committed ‡? Pray whose duty is it to support him? All that you write

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 19th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 22nd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 23rd 1782.

to me convinces me that it is difficult to understand one another at a distance; and, further, you are made to seize with avidity upon every thing that is unfavourable to your son *."

The extracts which we have taken from the letters of the Marquis of Mirabeau, contain almost always the language of mistrust and animosity. 'We now give a specimen from the same pen, of lordly as well as paternal pride. Some expressions used by the Intendant Gressien †, and by Mirabeau, greatly displeased the Marquis.

" They are easy, as it appears, with regard to his creditors. 'It is I who assure you of this,' says one—a sentence which calls to my recollection the 'It is I who tell you so,' of that puppy Desbirons. Little accustomed to this tone in men of business, I admire the influence of contact in making them insolent. The other fellow says to me: 'The bailiffs will not come in search of me at my own residence.' If I had dared to utter such an expression to my father, he would have cudgelled me on the spot, even although I had been thirty-three years of age. As for you, independently of our equality, your letters, when you do not scold me, always bear a character of equity and tenderness which is balm to my soul; but I cannot suffer the familiarity

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 7th 1782.

† An Advocate as honourable as he was learned, and who enjoyed the esteem and confidence of both the Marquis and the Bailli.

of companionship in any body else, seeing as I do here, so many poor creatures from both court and city, who accost me with the attitude, the form, and the very lace ruffles of inferiority—at least of *moral* inferiority *."

It was not however paternal pride alone, but paternal hatred which appeared in the Marquis's letters whenever he mentioned his son.

" A person writes to me from Aix in these words—'I hope that this man will not give those he finds means to gain over reason to repent their weakness. I know that he has a surprising and inconceivable talent for winning people.' Now you will immediately say that the writer has been gained; but remember the fable of him who held a snake in his hand, and asserted that it was a very flexible whip †."

" Be it so," the Bailli replied; " but why, as I am to profit by the fable to which you allude, have you put into my hands this same snake that is to sting me ‡?"

The Bailli continued to attest Mirabeau's good conduct, venturing now and then upon remonstrances, much better founded than useful.

" Honoré continues to be docile, without any such

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* Unpublished letters from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 22nd 1782, and January 27th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Maribeau, dated March 7th 1783.

thoughts as you mention, and much more uxorious, from calculation or otherwise, than you suppose. How soon would the business be settled if you were here! But have you never perceived that a man chalks out for himself duties that correspond only with his own tastes? Perhaps I may catch you doing this: for he who would administer the lash of discipline to his own shoulders until the blood started, would not hear the slightest contradiction. A hundred years ago, your grandfather said, 'There is no longer any honour except in castles;' Now, do you believe that it was your taste or your duty that induced you to fix your residence at Paris, the most stinking sink of corruption of any whose black vapours and filthy reptiles the sun shines upon? Was it your duty to go and inhale the atmosphere of that corrupt and money-jobbing city, where even the perspiration of the skin is corrosive and pestilential; where, moreover, you, who are a light yourself, are content to be a reflection, and have become fit for nothing in consequence of your incapacity in, and aversion to bowing and scraping, fawning and flattering, all which are as instinctive to the dwellers in courts and cities, with their faces of plaster, as dabbling in the mud is to ducks? I recollect, indeed, your telling me that, on account of either your children, or your wife—I forget which—you were forced to reside within reach of the government; but you would not have required the services of the government, had you kept your family in Provence.

You would have acquired any where else the same celebrity you have gained at Paris. Besides, you could have done without such celebrity; for it is not of that nature which best becomes a man of quality—the less so, as a thirst for reputation is a sort of dropsy, the more to be regretted, because the public always claim back their applause increased a hundredfold. You have noble estates in Provence, which have been left to the charge of a rascally agent, and this in favour of a plot of mud, in the middle of which stands the little mansion of an ordinary country gentleman *. Your estates in Provence are reduced in value, their produce made away with, and your castle dilapidated. All the other estates in the province, without any outlay, have doubled in value by time alone. Yours, with great outlay, are far from having doubled. Confess, that in this respect, you have chalked out duties for yourself according to your own taste. Nevertheless, the only thing I blame you for in this matter is, the confidence which made you treat with the greatest rogues upon earth, as if you had to do with honesty incarnate †. Without reading your letters over again, I recollect, in the gross, all you have written to me

* The estate and mansion of Bignon, upon which the Marquis confessed he had expended more than 300,000 francs in rural experiments, which had deteriorated rather than improved the property.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 28th 1782.

about Honoré, and therefore I never lose sight of him; but I cannot possibly, in honour and conscience, say that which is not true. He is very docile, and if, formerly, he completed nothing, he is very much altered, for he now assiduously pursues his undertakings. I will even tell you that I think this man has that portion of head which is deficient in us, and which I verily believe is the best; for we are neither of us fit for any thing but to fire blank cartridges, and study Plato's republic. I am, therefore, well satisfied with Honoré; nevertheless, I sleep with one eye open, though I think I might shut it with safety *."

The Marquis, disarmed for a time, was content to reply—

" I shall not answer you concerning the facts you state, because it belongs only to a fool, or to a minister, to speak decidedly at such a distance. As for my works, you are skilled in the knowledge of voracious minds; and you know, that if they are not occupied externally, they devour all inside. Now, what on earth should I have done with my books, for which you censure me? And what, in the name of God, should I do, if I did not throw myself out of myself?—if I did not vomit forth the many thoughts that would otherwise so greatly abridge your brother? Place yourself in my situation, in every sense and generation, position

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 16th 1782.

and matter, and your strong mind will then have bad company in its ramblings. Now, we have received a respected name: you have rendered it illustrious, and I celebrated. I accepted the will of fate and of duty; I may have been deceived by my head and my heart, upon both of which judgment has long since been passed both in my conscience and in my confessions. But I have acted as I conceived, felt, thought, and was able; for whoever does not take his own conscience for his sole judge, is at issue with himself all his life*. I have almost always exaggerated and misplaced my conscience, but never voluntarily and with evil intent. God is my good and just judge; and no doubt I have so acted as to have no other †."

We have lengthened a little the preceding extracts because we found them useful to complete the development of character which we considered necessary. We shall now give an account of the attempts made to bring about a reconciliation between Mirabeau and his wife, separated, *de facto*, during the last eight years. The greatest obstacles to this event had long been anticipated by the Bailli.

"I know of nothing worse than being allied to fire and water; or to make a tennis ball rebound when it falls upon a feather-bed. Your son, with great powers

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 18th 1782.

† Unpublished letter, from the same to the same, dated December 20th 1782.

of intellect, but always acted upon by warmth of heart; and you and I have to convince people, who are not without talent, but have no more sensibility than Chinese Pagodas.

"I think it right that Honoré should make every advance towards his wife and her father, though I expect to obtain nothing from them. These people affect to love and respect me; but they think of me only when I am in sight, and there could not be less communication between Mecca and the Holy Sepulchre than between us. They think only of their pleasure. They get up a party, or a play, or music, or anything they can imagine to take their revenge upon time, by killing it, as it kills them. This forms the chief part of their occupations, and your daughter-in-law is the principal divinity of the circle in which they move: 1st, Because she is the richest person in it; 2ndly, Because the collaterals (*impia gens!*) have an interest in keeping her in that situation, and her husband would be a Marplot the more dangerous in proportion as fire is more intense in the middle of a glacière*.

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 6th 1781.

The following prior and subsequent details are given in a note, in order to avoid extending our text.

"I perceive that since Honoré's release from prison, they are doing all they possibly can to make him angry with his young wife. There are parties to Tholonet (a seat belonging to the Count of Galiffet, situated about a league from Aix) and to Marseilles, with-

" Your son thinks that, under these circumstances, a suit for a separation would be an act of sacrilege on

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out either her father or her aunt (the Countess de Grasse, of Bar*), plays in which, for want of amateur actors and actresses, professional persons of either sex are introduced, &c. Notwithstanding numerous pressing invitations sent to me a hundred times, I have always affected to refuse going either to Tholonet, or to these plays; but my refusal seems not to be felt. Yesterday I was obligingly reproached with not being so often seen at their house as formerly; but I told her in the presence of her aunt, that in a short time nobody would know her place of residence, nor even her name; and that in future she would be called *Madame de Tholonet* instead of *Madame de Mirabeau*. She did not seem to comprehend the force

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* The family of Grasse was connected with the Countess of Mirabeau by the strongest bonds of affection as well as of kindred. At the period of the suit for a separation, of which we are about to give an account, Madame de Mirabeau's unexpected refusal to return to her husband, and her libellous statements in justification of this refusal, were attributed to the instances of the collaterals. Count de Grasse, the chief of the house, was openly accused of being at the head of this league, by Mirabeau, who wrote to him, December 20th, 27th, and 30th, 1783, these violent and insulting letters, afterwards published, pages 51 and 53 of his "Case for the Grand Counsel," on appeal from a decree of the Parliament of Provence. Mirabeau, moreover, pursued his enmity against Count de Grasse, and displayed it whenever he had an opportunity. For instance, he once mentioned him in these terms—

"'If M. de Grasse has shown the English that intrigue could still dictate an unworthy choice in France, our D'Orvilliers, our Suffrein, and our Vaudreuil, must have convinced them that we still have seamen, and that the race of Duquesne, Jean-Bart, Duguê-Trouin, La Bourdonnois, (I put the plebeians first,) Tourville, d'Etrées, and Relingue—that the race of great sea commanders which arose on a sign from the monarch, can again arise at his command.'"—*Doubts upon the freedom of the Scheldt*, p. 78.

their part; but their cold hearts do not look so high, but push on towards their ends; and Honoré must

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of what I said; but her aunt, whom I examined closely, appeared somewhat surprised."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March* 14*th* 1781.

The Marquis approved of this information, for he wrote, March 22nd 1781, in reply to his brother.

" It appears to me that you said your say with all becoming delicacy. * * * What you stated was very proper and well timed."

In another letter the Bailli observes—

" They are sorry that the plays and balls are interrupted by our being in the land of the living. A milliner said, the other day; 'that a gentleman had come who had interrupted the balls and plays at Tholonet, and she therefore sold nothing.' But this woman did not include the supper parties which please a multitude of persons, and a very gay house where there is singing all day long, but whose piping is now put out of tune."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January* 19*th* 1783.

" Marignane is deeply tainted with that personal feeling which you term the scrofula of self-love, and his daughter has become necessary to him in order that he may have a house and a society in which he is *epicuri de grege porcus.* The collaterals have persuaded him that he is upon very bad terms with his son-in-law, with whom he used to be uttering coarse ribaldry from morning till night, when they were together. He is conscious that a husband, by his sole presence, would put an end to this abuse of plays, music, supper parties and dissipation, if not disorder. This is the knot of the business." *Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 7th* 1783.

These explanations by the Bailli, attributing the lawsuit to the Marquis of Marignane's selfishness, are confirmed by the following extract from a letter written by the Countess of Mirabeau:—

" I do not cease saying and thinking that there is no comparison between a life of great dissipation, filled with what is termed noisy pleasures, and the delights of a well-united family circle, in which

be well aware that, in these days, he is always right who succeeds without any scruples as to the choice of means*."

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each endeavours to assist in promoting the happiness of the others. I have told you this a hundred times; I tell it every day to my father, who pretends that I shall feel *ennui* when I leave off theatricals. I can assure you that he will much more regret not seeing me play, than I shall regret not playing. I think I am sure of this (so strong is the self-love of a father with regard to his child), and I hope soon to convince him of it.

"I must, however, inform you that there is another person who would be sorry to see me leave off acting in these plays, and this person is my son. It is amusing to see him, when I am at Tholonet, acting all day long with the Count of Galiffet's daughter. The most singular part of it is that he retains the names of all the pieces we play. You would not suppose that the two parts with which he is most taken, are the Deserter and Alcindor, in 'La Belle Arsène.' Nothing amuses me so much as to see him strutting about when he wants to go upon the stage." *Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 19th* 1778.

At a subsequent period, the Bailli, to justify the Countess of Mirabeau by stating her submission to her father's will, wrote as follows:—

"Marignane or his agents have forced your daughter-in-law to return to the place where her son died, and to act a play upon his ashes. The poor woman fainted three times, and could not sit at table. This had no effect upon those selfish men." *Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 4th* 1783.

In the letter we have just quoted from the Countess of Mirabeau, we find evidence that the irritation and animosity displayed by the Marquis of Marignane in the lawsuit at Aix, had its origin in an older and much more serious cause. The Marquis, as we have

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 6th 1781.

Either from real repugnance, or an excess of precaution, the Marquis had long declared that he would

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before stated, led an epicurean and careless life, which threw his affairs into confusion. His fortune was impaired, and it was feared that he would attempt to alienate his entailed estate. The Marquis of Mirabeau, on the other hand, was anxious that the entail should be registered in the interest of his grandson, whose death he did not at that time anticipate. This precaution, which was taken without due delicacy, deeply offended the Marquis of Marignane, if we may judge from the following passage in his daughter's letter:—

"There is a matter about which I wish you would join me in speaking to my father-in-law. He wishes to have the entail of my father's estate registered. I have written to him the reasons which forced me to mention the subject to my father. It has produced an effect much more serious than I had apprehended; and although my father knows that the matter did not originate with me, this has not prevented him from saying the most unpleasant things to me. I was afraid to enter into particulars in my last letter to my father-in-law; but, having received one from him by the last post, in which he persists in urging me to give him these particulars, I shall write to him again. I confess that this difficulty distresses me a great deal; and, to conceal nothing from you, I must inform you that my father assured me, when I informed him of my father-in-law's intention, that if it was carried into effect, not only would he, the very next day, sell off all his estates that were not entailed, but at the end of the year he would make a will depriving my son of the property. To this I replied that he was master of his own fortune, and that I knew not what it was to curry favour for an inheritance—even were it my father's. But you may easily suppose that I deeply feel this blow. My aunt, who was present, tried to remove my apprehensions with regard to the will; but the least that could happen would be to see him dismember his Marquisate of Marignane, by selling Vitrolles which is not entailed, as are neither my grandmother's estates nor the Iles d' Or. Then would come annoyances which would place me in a very awkward situation, between my father-in-law and my father, and must prove injurious to my son.

take no direct part in bringing about the Countess of Mirabeau's return to her husband.

Such is my situation at present. Pray explain it properly to my father-in-law, and entreat him not to push these forms any further, as they will, ultimately, prove very prejudicial to my son."

The Marquis of Mirabeau, however, always and every where inflexible, had the entails registered without further ceremony *, as appears from the following passage in one of his letters:—

" I who am the great registrar of entails, have put it out of his power to injure his grandchildren much." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 25th* 1782.

This very natural and perfectly legal measure, but which the circumstances of the case, perhaps, rendered offensive, and which soon became useless, because the grandson died in less than three months after it took place, deeply offended the Marquis of Marignane, and increased to a hatred, afterwards fully displayed the aversion which had been insinuated into his mind against Mirabeau, who was doomed at all times to suffer from the faults of others no less than from his own †.

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* " I further owe to myself, as the father of a family, the observance of a single form, that of registering the deeds of entail of the Marignane property. This is between ourselves. Those of my own property are registered; and I will register theirs under their very noses." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 23rd* 1778.

The prudent and conciliating Bailli replied:—

" Does it not appear to you that you are placing the fingers of this young woman between two stones?—and that this measure is rather harsh?" *Unpublished letter dated July 7th* 1778.

The Marquis again wrote:—

" Marignane is really bound by nothing but his daughter's dower; and it is to bind him by the entails that I ought to act, and, therefore, will act. Compared with this object, a little animadversion is a mere trifle."

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* The Marquis of Mirabeau pretended, however, that the resent-

" I have no greater wish to throw myself at the feet of this troop of play-actors † to beg for posterity, than I have to beg a handmaiden Agar for my good angel. All that I ought to do is to put Honoré in the way; and faith, after that, let them settle their business if they can ‡."

The Bailli was persuaded that mild measures would produce no effect.

" What can you expect from those people? and on what side can you attack them? The wife has neither feeling, nor strength, and with her father, can have none. He is a good kind of man, and a man of honour, according to the French mode, and to the modern signification of the term; but he is subdued by an inertness that keeps him, every morning, four hours with his feet upon the fender, and the *Mercure*, or a novel, in his hand. The insipid life he leads appears sweet to him; he cannot bear the least turbu-

ment arising from the registering of the entails, had fallen upon himself alone.

" When you are placed with your back against the wall and M. Loyal *, if necessary, advances, I alone shall have to bear the evil, as at the time when I had their entails registered." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 1st* 1782.

* M. Loyal, the Huissier in the 5th act of Molière's ' Tartuffe.'

† Allusion to the private theatricals, in which the Countess took a part.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 12th 1781.

lence; and the incident of a rejunction would give a rude sweep to the roses upon which the good man loves to stretch his limbs. His grandson would not bear his name, and after him he cares not if the world is at an end *. As for his daughter, she is accustomed to be the great attraction of a very noisy society, all the members of which pass from the concert to the play—from the play to the ball—and from the ball to the four cardinal points, or wherever there is the least appearance of gaiety going on. She is the divinity of all these people; and she loves her pedestal, from which she would have to descend †."

The Marquis of Mirabeau, to whose changes of intention the reader must be now accustomed, took the project at heart, for a moment, and announced a wish to act in person.

" I am glad that Marignane neither replied to nor accepted, when Honoré was released, the offer I made him not to send my son to Provence without his sanction. When the time comes, M. Loyal shall advance in my name ‡.

On a sudden he became irritated at the difficulties he encountered, which he attributed to his son.

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 23rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 13th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 1st 1782.

"All would yield to the Count's ascendency, if he chose. At a distance every body disowns him, but near, no one can resist him except himself*. Difficult as matters appear, he may gain over his wife and his father-in-law, too, if he pleases: but the rascal will not; he only wants to be a country juggler, and to end his days in a dungeon†. If he had chosen to have his wife back, she would have come; but it required years of good conduct to obtain her, and gentleness and respect, instead of his offensive insinuations with regard to the life she leads, which is irreproachable‡."

The Bailli immediately replied—

"'Years of good conduct!'—be it so. But what is to become of your posterity; for surely you would not ask this woman for issue when she is sixty years old. 'Gentleness!'—but how can he show gentleness to persons who will not see him, and do not even read his letters? 'Respect!'—with all my heart; and, perhaps

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 21st 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 31st 1782. Some time afterwards, the Marquis, notwithstanding his brother's remonstrance, persisted in this unjust opinion, and wrote as follows:—

"This man obtained his wife when he chose to do so, and now he wishes for nothing but exposure and scandal; it is the air he breathes."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated January 23rd* 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 20th 1782.

you know better what is passing at Aix than those who are on the spot. But as you know that even the Holy Virgin herself was not beyond the reach of calumny, do you think that the fact of your daughter-in-law having acted plays, and received the news of her husband's condemnation to death, upon a stage erected over the remains of her child, has not reduced her, considering the point of honour among females, very near her husband's level * ? "

Many days had not elapsed ere the Marquis no longer cared about bringing the husband and wife together.

" I will not have any thing to do with a wife who was acting plays when they were trying her husband for his life ; and who has had no more consideration for my continued kindness, not even for remembrances of her on new-year's day, than for her husband. I have paid my reckonings, and my expenses are over. I have been long enough laughed at and betrayed, and henceforth I shall live for myself alone †."

The Bailli persisted in his views.

" When did you discover that such a suit had an appearance of the most disgusting interested motives? But, in the first place, why, against my will, did you send me your son who is unfortunately yoked to the

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 30th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 10th 1782.

most silly and most narrow-minded fool of all her sex? Was it to stuff him with straw and put him in a glass case, or to expose us all three to the singular affront we have received? And besides, how long is it since people have become so very delicate at Paris, in the midst of all the possible social infirmities and decrepitude, and of the crumbling to pieces at your very feet of all good morals? Is the advantage of continuing your race of no consequence to you at present? It would be all very well if a man by separating from his wife could unmarry himself and take another; but he remains married, and his family is ruined for want of progeny. Is it in a country where law nobles, and quill drivers, and finance people, and peculators agree so well in benumbing heads and flattening hearts—is it in a country where the high patricians seek to yoke themselves with the daughters of publicans—that a man who claims his wife can be accused of sordid motives? What can be the object of his pretended sordid views, since his wife has nothing of her own, and the fortune, if it remains, will belong only to their children * ? I have

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1782. This well-founded observation, and the explanations we have given elsewhere, prove that it was not, as was asserted, an immoderate desire to attain opulence, that induced Mirabeau to claim his wife, the whole of whose fortune was then reduced to a very moderate and ill paid annuity. How justly, therefore, may we censure those biographers who have urged the supposition that Mirabeau was governed by such base motives? And especially Peuchet who, Vol. I. pp. 126, 217, 218, 280, and Vol. II.

written to his wife pointing out the impossibility of a judicial separation; for I am well acquainted with her hand writing, and have twenty letters from her, expressing great tenderness towards him, and written since they have lived asunder. Now you are aware that a single friendly letter does away with previous ill-usage, however well substantiated. But there never was any ill-usage on his part: she has confessed this to me a hundred times *."

"You are wrong to press this point," the Marquis replied. "Of what use are love declarations upon stamped paper? Or what is a wife obtained by a judi-

p. 135, endeavours thus to account for a pretended plan which he imputes to Mirabeau, of carrying off his wife and taking her to Holland—probably to keep company with Sophie! It is, however, but just to this writer to state that, though he very often looked but at one side of the question, he was in this instance misled by the Marquis of Mirabeau who, under date of September 5th 1777, wrote to the Marquis of Marignane:

"He (Mirabeau) has in fact no other expedition to undertake than that of carrying off his own wife, to make a hostage of her, and through her get all he can out of your property." *Case for the Countess of Mirabeau*, p. 32.

Peuchet may also have derived his information from judicial documents: for instance, from the Case just quoted, pp. 25, 87, *et seq.* But having, without authority, constituted himself the reporter to posterity, of all the crimes attached to Mirabeau's memory, before the tribunal of public opinion, he ought to have read and discussed the irresistible refutations of these calumnies, presented by Mirabeau himself in his "Reply to a calumnious Libel," &c. pp. 101—117.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 8th 1782.

cial sentence * ? All this resembles the quarrels of thieves and prostitutes. As for him, he will persevere, so that he make a noise. He is his mother's own child ; and she has no objection to be hanged provided she is talked about †."

The Bailli and his nephew exhausted all possible means of conciliation. After writing the most respectful letters to the Marquis of Marignane, and the most affectionate to his daughter ‡, Mirabeau obtained replies at first cold and formal, then threatening and insulting.

" Not only did they insult us, but they did so even before we made any proposal ; and before we went to Aix they had obtained opinions upon the separation, and retained in advance six months before § twenty

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 19th 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 22nd 1782.

‡ Unpublished letters from the same to the same, dated October 22nd, November 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 10th, 1782 ; January 27th, and February 28th, 1783.

§ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 8th 1783. Although these letters, some of which are master-pieces, are fully explanatory, extremely interesting, and remarkable in every respect, we do not insert them because they have been published elsewhere. See " Observations for the Count of Mirabeau," Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 4to, 73 pages, pp. 37—60. See also Vitry's Collection, pp. 260—280, 300—305 ; and Peuchet's Works, Vol. II. pp. 131, 132—135, 136, 137, 139—141, 155—157, 158—161.

advocates *, on purpose that we might not employ them †."

They even took the most singular precautions to defend themselves against Mirabeau's violence, of which they affected to be in great dread.

"The house is barricaded against the husband. They have placed a Cerberus to defend their doors; a thing unknown and unheard of, as you well know, in this town ‡. They display the greater fear and shame

* This singular precaution, which showed so little confidence in the justice of their suit, and so little delicacy in the choice of means, caused Mirabeau some embarrassment. At first, he could obtain scarcely any other assistance than that of M. Jaubert, in whom he found great devotedness and courage, besides superior knowledge and ability. But this gentleman had little warmth of manner, and was not much accustomed to oral pleading, a circumstance which, doubtless more than any other, induced Mirabeau to plead his cause himself. Fortunately, from the very beginning of the suit, Mirabeau's irresistible ascendency, the justice of his cause, and especially the dangerous situation in which he was placed by the manœuvres of his opponents, interested in his behalf a young advocate who at first spontaneously, but anonymously, supplied him with points and arguments, and afterwards openly lent him assistance. This unexpected aid was of great use to Mirabeau. But its consequences were still more useful to him; for he formed a close intimacy with M. Pellenc, his generous auxiliary, whose probity, knowledge, and immense talents he soon appreciated; and no sooner had Mirabeau taken his place in the Constituent Assembly than he sent for M. Pellenc, who became, as we shall hereafter show, the wisest of his advisers, the most intimate and skilful, as well as the most occupied of his fellow-labourers.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

‡ Same letter.

because every body here is on his side, and I see in spite of myself, the affection felt towards him, by people of all classes, even by some of his creditors. I can perceive that the Marquis of Marignane's servants wish him to be reconciled to his wife, although an attempt has been made to induce them to swear to positive ill-usage on his part, which they refused to do *. One of them who is here, being told of a report that the chateau of Marignane was guarded by peasants to prevent Honoré's entrance, replied:—'Why, they could not have found such guards; and there is not a peasant who would not put him into his pocket to make him enter †.'"

Soon after this, Mirabeau's letters were returned to him unopened, and every thing announced a speedy commencement of hostilities.

"I am informed that the Marignanes do every thing they can to prejudice the public against Honoré, and that all means are employed, even to retaining every

* Although this disgraceful attempt did not succeed, Mirabeau, sometime after, alluded to it, in the following spirited passage:—

"Evidence!—why what could they have done in this case? What is evidence by witnesses, after evidence by absurdity? Who does not know what a rich and powerful individual can effect upon a certain class of men? Who is unacquainted with the theory and facility of suborning without subornation?" *Observations on a calumnious libel*, &c. p. 183.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 10th 1783.

counsel in the place, exciting his creditors against him, and getting Castillon * to write denunciations against his 'Lettres de Cachet.' They go, purse in hand, begging for false witnesses, to prove imaginary ill-usage on his part; and yet they are very certain—so is the public—so are we ourselves—that there never was any ill-usage. Proofs to the contrary are abundant. What then can be their object †?"

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* Leblanc de Castillon, Procureur General. This functionary hated Mirabeau, and denounced him several times to the Government. Peuchet has published one of these denunciations, vol. ii. p. 262; and we have others of the same description.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 15th 1783.

"When you come to consider that, from the very beginning, we have offered to be put to the test by proof, did it even extend over a lapse of six months, or of one, two, or three years; that they replied 'Never,' to the twenty persons we employed to make the offer; that they also declined several proposals for submitting the case to the arbitration of four military and law nobles; that every day the insolence of their language increased, and they at length adopted the outrageous measure of refusing to allow of any explanation by the husband to the wife, and of returning the husband's letters unopened —you will be of opinion that on our side the measure is more than overflowing."—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 22nd* 1783.

We find in another letter an account of this act of decided hostility:—

"All this was followed up, on Friday last, the first day of your allowing us a free range, by a piece of unparalleled violence. Your son sent his wife a letter. After many ridiculous ceremonies, this woman's footman took charge of the letter and carried it to his mistress, who, very shortly after, sent it back without having broken the seal The short interval between the reception of the letter, and her

The Marquis persisted in his refusal to take an active part in the measures which his brother and son were pursuing.

"If you wish that the husband and wife should come together, which circumstance alone can perpetuate your house, you must prevent those people from saying what they do, by replying that at most you only tolerate Honoré's being here. But in this case, I request that you will put into good language only what I dictate to you; for I must say that your heart thinks a great deal too much. Your pen, after having drawn upon you much affliction, is the very thing that renders this reconciliation so difficult. Really, you commit yourself with every one by what you write; and all your misfortunes have been distilled from your pen, because you have written during your whole life according to the impulse of the moment, without reflecting that as circumstances change, so ideas may and ought to change *."

These observations, so just and true, perfectly explain the variations which we have shown to have been so frequent in the mind of the Marquis of Mirabeau, who did not attempt to deny them.

"Let it be said for the past, present, and future,

sending it back was filled up by a violent altercation between her and her father's advisers. She attempted to resist their will. They have rendered her father deaf and blind, and as impudent as themselves."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.*

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 3rd 1782.

that when I wrote, it was according to the then existing state of things. When these things became altered my letters were also altered. This to all appearance will be the case in future, when any change occurs *."

"In your place," answered the Bailli, "I should reply that people ought naturally to conclude that Honoré was here by your orders; that you have never interfered between him and his wife; that the discussion lies between themselves alone, and will, no doubt, terminate amicably; but that you cannot find fault with a husband for claiming his wife, because paternal authority does not reach so far. This would come the more seasonably, as it is possible that the wife is anxious a judgment should compel her to join her husband, Thus she would appear not to oppose her father's wishes. But Honoré would not accept her on those terms, if he did not think that fear alone now kept her from him. Lastly, his wife has acted much worse than he has done,—for during his sufferings, she was exhibiting herself upon the stage. And to tell you the truth, Honoré, though very culpable, has been still more unfortunate. I should never have done were I to adduce all the evidence that proves this fact. Therefore, will you have the vindication, or not? Make up your mind. For my own part, I am quite indifferent on the subject †.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.

But nothing could remove the father's prejudices, and he lost no opportunity of showing them.

" As for your brother, he is as infatuated as usual. I never before saw so many respectable people become surety for a man who so little deserves it. It is the same thing at Pontarlier, Besançon, Aix, Mirabeau, and Marignane: all join in the same tune, to such a degree that one knows not which to listen to in this concert of panegyrists *."

The Bailli insisted upon a reply to his question.

" What is really your decided will with regard to your son? Why did he come to Provence?—for I warned you a hundred times that the huissier must be made to act, and now you will no longer admit that our back is against the wall. So long as Honoré remained under your own charge, you sang his praises, though with a reserve which the past naturally inspired. Since you have lost sight of him, people have persuaded you that he is a frightful monster. You pretend that you forbade a thousand times his having recourse to a huissier. If so, you had only to inform me of it in time, and I would have replied that, in such case, his journey to Provence was not only useless but ridiculous, to say no worse †.

" I am well aware that in this country, your son is

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated January 17th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 25th 1782.

accused of having a fiery temper; but nobody can be mentioned as having suffered by it; and people seem to think that if he suffers much longer under this excommunication, it would be renouncing his wife, and admitting the charge attempted to be fastened upon him with regard to her, but of which he is certainly not guilty. He terms such a thing 'dishonouring himself;' and, in fact, it would be leaving the whole province in the persuasion that he ill-used his wife; and that his opponents have real cause of complaint, otherwise he would not remain inactive after four months of overtures which, far from doing good, have only roused angry feelings, and led to all sorts of insult, addressed as much to you and me, as to himself.

"With regard to his alleged misdeeds, I can see only one: that of having got into debt; but, although he has never stated that he was urged on by his wife, yet in the trades-people's accounts, often three quarters of the amount, and always two-thirds, are for things purchased to give to her. Surely this cannot be termed ill-usage *."

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 4th 1783. The Bailli recurs to the subject in the following passage:—

"What I have seen relative to your son's debts, is that three quarters of the amount is for presents to his wife. What is still stronger, is that some are for presents to his father-in-law—that is to say, bills from booksellers for works received by M. de Marignane," &c. *Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated January 27th* 1783.

" I have no alteration to suggest in your plans; but, as you have sent me your son, I wish to know whether it is for the purpose of my boiling or roasting him? Do you wish that he should be reconciled to his wife?—and that he should pay his debts? Say yes, or no—for I am not of an age to be trifled with any longer. Think and desire; but, in God's name, decide by yourself, and take no female advice, unless it be Saillanette's *. "

The Marquis, however, persisted in rejecting the means after he had determined upon obtaining an end.

" I have just received your last letter, which according to the tertian ague that pervades your letters ever since you have had a ward, was necessarily one inflicting correction. And, indeed, it tells me home truths in pretty plain terms. I shall say nothing in reply, except that you are mistaken in pretending to be more vexed than your elder brother. If this be so, it is

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We even find the fact admitted by the Marquis.

" The separation of property was the less necessary, and even the less proper, because the greater part of the debts were contracted for supplies of things for a lady's use." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 12th 1777.*

This testimony completely confirms Mirabeau's assertion in the justification addressed to his father, March 2nd 1778. *Correspondence from Vincennes*, vol. I. p. 321. See also the Cases published by Mirabeau during the law proceedings between the Countess of Mirabeau and himself.

* Unpublished letters from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 6th and February 7th 1783.

lucky that contradiction remained at a distance, or you would have thrown it out of the window. Be that as it may, you call upon me positively to say whether or not I will have a lawsuit. As you are determined to have an answer *yes* or *no*, I say *no*, positively ***no***, for the present *no*. I have hold of each end of the business, but hold only by cutting reeds, thorny branches, and red-hot iron-bars. As the public love five-act tragedies and dramas, let them ask Molé for some: I and mine have been and are still too much exposed to the public gaze. My own suit still makes a noise, and my name is each day bawled out in Court. Now, I am anxious not to increase this universal question: 'shall we never hear anything else but about that unruly race of the Mirabeaus * ?'

"You and I would require to have the shoulders of Atlas, to support the weight of all these attacks upon our house. Besides, I warned you that we might look for the most insulting defence; and if the stupidity of servants have appeared to you insults from their masters, it will be much worse when the stream of charges and accusations and even calumnies, which are always the concomitants of causes of this description, begins to flow. It is your duty to laugh at this progress of human passion, and to keep back a man who, accustomed as he is to defy the whole world, and to

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 27th 1783.

turn his back upon reprisals, will find it a new thing to be told to his face, and to hear denounced to the public, all that has been said of him behind his back *."

Both the uncle and the nephew were well aware that the counsel of their adversaries were preparing to publish a very insulting statement, the principal materials of which were taken from the letters written by the Marquis of Mirabeau against his son. The Marquis, on being written to by his brother, on this matter, replied—

" Yes, yes, I warn you, and very strongly, and by duplicate and by triplicate, that they have letters written by me, and many too, in which I treat this newly-manufactured Cato with great disrespect; and in which, among other verses in his just praise, I call him what he then was, a consummate rascal, whom it was expedient to withdraw from the sight and remembrance of man. Recollect who we were, and what our ancestors were; and then, when these letters appear, you will consider and decide whether or not I judged him too harshly. If he fancies that this evidence, given by a father against a son then thirty years old, does not redound to his honour, but proves injurious to his cause, let him consider that he himself chose to run these risks. If he wishes for copies of these letters, in order to weigh and enjoy the savour of their contents,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 13th 1783.

I kindly offer them to him. I know that all this matters not with regard to his wife; but *molti pochi fanno un assai* *."

It was in this way that the Marquis spoke of the letters he had written against his son: and both the uncle and the nephew well knew, and justly feared the effect these letters would produce. Thus the latter exclaimed on a subsequent occasion, when speaking of his wife, to the persons by whom he was beset:—

"Hatred between married people!—defamation between the father-in-law and the son-in-law—between the father-in-law and the daughter-in-law—between the father and the son! Good God, what a system!..... You, who ought to rush between your father and your husband, keep them back, and disarm them—you, who ought, in your own pacific hands, the only pledge of their alliance, to join theirs, you strive to sever them still wider!—you shake between them the torch of the

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 11th 1783. In corroboration of this extract, we transcribe a short passage from a letter written by Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant on the 17th of November preceding:—

"All the difficulties we meet with here from the Marignanes, whose twenty-three advocates told them point blank that they had not the shadow of a legal ground for demanding a separation, proceed from a dozen of my father's letters, in which he describes me as the greatest scoundrel that ever drew breath, and from two others besides, in which he declares, upon his honour, that he will never suffer me to claim Madame de Mirabeau." Vitry, to whom Mirabeau wrote at the same time, has quoted, p. 285, part of this passage.

furies. Stay your hand, and save yourself from eternal remorse! Stop!—for death is but the middle of a long life, and the Supreme Judge, who weighs your counsels, will also weigh your weakness *."

Mirabeau's fears, with regard to the use intended to be made of his father's letters, were but too well founded. The numerous extracts from them given in this work, especially in that part of it in which we relate the principal faults he had committed, and his flight, may enable the reader to form some notion of the dreadful violence of the letters addressed to the Marquis of Marignane, by a father, such as we have shown the Marquis of Mirabeau to have been †. These letters were full of pretended facts, plans of spoliation, violence, poisoning, murder—in short, of all the wild exaggerations and atrocious fictions which the credulous animosity of the Marquis had induced him to believe,—for he was always led away by his first impulse on every occasion. Whatever may be thought of these productions, to such as would form a just notion of them, it would be necessary to read what neither our plan nor our limits allow of our inserting in this work, namely, the extracts contained in the statements published by Mirabeau's opponents, at the

* Observations upon a calumnious Libel, p. 44.

† A discontented father, whose anger is never measured by his expressions, whose delight is hyperbole, always looked upon the son, whose conduct raised his ire, as the basest of men."—*Observations upon a calumnious Libel*, &c., p. 118.

time of the lawsuit, of which we are here giving an account—statements containing abominable calumnies, which have outlived an ephemeral litigation, and furnished, more perhaps than the falsified Vincennes letters, the materials for a great number of pamphlets published during the Revolution of 1789, as also for several pretended biographies which are nothing but infamous libels. We here denounce only the barbarous indifference with which the Marquis of Mirabeau received notice of the approaching publication of his letters—a publication, however, which, as we shall hereafter show, strongly affected this man, whose feelings were, in fact, as acute as he was himself harsh and haughty in form. Beyond this, we limit ourselves to proving, that six years before these letters served the Marquis of Marignane as a pretence for openly declaring himself the enemy of his son-in-law, these same letters had induced him to join in the severity shown by the Marquis of Mirabeau towards his son. The proof of this lies in the following passage :—

" In consequence of the challenge sent to Valbelle, Marignane has written to the minister, in the strongest terms, concerning this scoundrel, giving his reasons for acceding in every point to the measures taken permanently *."

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis du Saillant, dated September 7th 1777. A single passage will suffice to

We return to our narrative. The Bailli, confounded by his brother's tergiversations, was discouraged for a moment.

" The last letters I have received from the Bailli, are evidently below par; he has not by any means the same tone of assurance. Until now, it has been impossible to bend the loins or bear down the head of that man; but his triumphant cock-a-hoop will place him upon the saddle again *."

The Bailli insisted upon an ultimatum.

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show the advantages which Mirabeau's adversaries derived from these letters.

" But what, it is already asked, can be proved by letters written against a son by a father, perhaps unjust, but at all events, irritated against this son?

" What can be proved by such letters?..... That it would be atrocious, even under this supposition, to impute as a crime to Madame de Mirabeau the profound impression they have made upon her mind; that the Mirabeau family are bound to respect a repugnance produced by themselves; and that this latter family have lost the right of forcing the will of a wife whose mind they have seduced, and whose affections they have destroyed by their own manœuvres.

" After describing a son and a nephew in the blackest colours; after communicating the most fatal and alarming facts confidentially to a timid and sensitive woman, could they reasonably expect to bring about a second time a cohabitation which they so long strived to render impossible?

" No!—in such a case, the law, whilst it deplored the imposture of the father, would be in no hurry to pronounce upon the fate of the children. It would never give up to misfortune and despair, a wife too well justified in fearing every thing."—*Case for Counsel's opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau, &c.* p. 92.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 17th 1783.

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* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 7th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, lated February 19th 1783.

"As it is high time to *correspond*, and you do nothing but *respond;* and as, by right, you have right to direct the line of conduct we are to pursue; and although I might find reason to complain of having been made seriously to commit myself—a thing, I trust, I have not deserved—I will, nevertheless, sacrifice my repugnance, on condition that you write an ostensible letter to your son, in which you forbid him positively to begin proceedings; because we can then yield with a good grace *. Take care that the part I play here does not become worse than that of a buffoon. I know that I exemplify the fable of the miller, his son, and the ass; and in whatever manner I, or we, act, *laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis* †."

The Marquis began to perceive that he could not always resist.

"I am persecuted here about the pleadings; and I shall ultimately loosen the bridle, as I can no longer keep it tight, which will be the end of the matter. This gentleman, if he chose, would not fail to bring forward plenty of reasons for being humiliated, he and his graces; but provided they make people talk about them, even on the occasion of their being whipped and branded, they would still be delighted ‡. My brother

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 11th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 21st 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis du Saillant, dated February 11th 1783.

is always as infatuated as ever, and sticks to his game. I have said all, having sanctioned the lawsuit; but what makes my brother angry is, that he would wish it to be a spontaneous sanction, not one forced from me,—but I cannot leap that ditch*."

The Marquis, however, thought that the Marignane family would feel some scruples in publishing his confidential letters.

"Honour in those people!" the Bailli replied; "whenever you hear the statue of Hannibal at the Tuileries, declare that it is flattered at being placed by the side of that of Cæsar, you will find communicability between a good and honest heart, and a gizzard absolutely and exclusively personal†."

It has just been shown that the Marquis of Mirabeau expressed no regret at the letters he had formerly written against his son, and which the Marignane family intended to use, and soon afterwards did use, as a terrible engine of defamation against Mirabeau. The Bailli declared to his brother, that the threats held out to this effect would soon be realized.

"I have seen some of your letters concerning the proof sheets of their forthcoming publication. I could not believe my eyes. Where did you hear all you have stated, and of which you say I have evidence—which

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 17th 1783.

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is not true? The demon of scriblomania must have possessed you to a strange degree when you wrote in that style. I could not have believed that they, whom I considered honest people, would have published such things * !"

The Marquis, however, was not to be shaken by this intelligence.

" I am like David, who lamented his son's rebellion, and then his punishment. But what would you have me do? All means are lawful to rabid litigators. We must drink this fresh cupful, and the shame will not be ours any more than the crime.†"

But, strange to say! — the very man who had hardened his heart beforehand to meet such a publication—the very man who, in the numerous statements he had published against his wife, did not spare her any more than she spared him—the Marquis of Mirabeau, himself, was offended at the proposal made to him, to use the most natural means of defence for his son, by opposing to the demand of the son's wife for a separation, evidence of the tender attachment she evinced towards her husband at the very time of the pretended ill-usage she alleged against him.

" These letters," wrote the Bailli, " do honour to both, as they are letters from a mistress to a fond

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 7th 1783.

lover, rather than a correspondence between man and wife *."

"With regard to the Countess's letters," the Marquis replied, "I have always considered letters a confidential deposit; and that, therefore, a letter addressed to me ought never to appear in a court of justice, except with my consent. In my own business, I might have made use of letters, but never would. I beg that in this, you will take compassion upon my old-fashioned principles†. As for what you say about publishing the letters, expressing affection, which your nephew has received from his wife, I know: 1st, that the gentleman has no modesty; 2ndly, that an internal feeling tells him that he is not exactly formed to be kissed; 3rdly, that if St. Vergogna was never the holy patroness of such people, she was always ours; 4thly, that every time I have seen such fragments in law cases, I have been disgusted with them, and considered that they rendered him despicable who adduced them;

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 16th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 7th 1783. The Bailli writes as follows:—

"I do take compassion upon your 'old-fashioned principles' with regard to letters, as I cannot do otherwise. You apply those principles to persons who make an undue use of your letters. I have never had a taste for killing any body; but if I could not defend myself in any other manner, I would kill whomsoever attempted to kill me."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January* 15*th* 1783.

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5thly, that marriage is a bond of honour and chastity; and that if there be the least passion in such extracts, it is shaming the wife, and deflowering her daughters *."

What more could we say to show the irresistible influence of the Marquis's prejudices over his mind, when they induced him, even to the detriment of his own views, to oppose his son's measures? Anxious to reach the denouëment of this deplorable litigation, we extract, in closing the present Book, only a single paragraph, showing the period when, after so much caution and attempts at conciliation, hostilities really began.

" Our adverse parties, driven to extremities by the persons by whom they were beset: namely, collaterals, dinner-eaters, supper-eaters, parasites, flatterers, players, &c., have filled the measure to the brim. I do not conceal from you, that your son kept himself under controul much longer than I did: at length, we both loosened the reins, gave the spur, and off we started. He filed his petition, and now we are footing it away at a great rate †."

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 26th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 3rd 1783. On the 28th of February, Mirabeau filed his petition for an injunction to his wife to return and live with him. On the 8th of March, the Countess filed a counter-petition, demanding that the injunction prayed for by her husband should not be

granted. Mirabeau filed a second petition, and had a copy of it served upon his wife, and at the same time, published a statement entitled, "Observations for the Count of Mirabeau, &c." (Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 4to. 73 pages). In this production Mirabeau displays the most affectionate delicacy towards his wife; and the first half of it is chiefly made up of extracts from, or transcriptions of, thirty-five most affectionate letters which she wrote to him before they separated, this separation being caused solely by Mirabeau's being thrown into prison, whither his wife refused to bear him company.

BOOK XIII.

EVERY thing now tended to give great notoriety to the pending suit between the two first families in the province, the inhabitants of which were divided into two parties, each adhering to one or other of the litigants. In Provence, the passions and feelings are warm, and no individual sets up a claim to be considered either neuter or impartial. This led to some very curious incidents of which we have an interesting account written by Mirabeau himself, but never published, although he originally intended it for publication. But he afterwards altered his mind, because he found that he had been involuntarily led into speculations upon public law, which bore an undue proportion to this subject, which thence became mere accessory matter, and did not therefore answer his purpose. And finding as he went on, that his views with regard to the defects and errors of the law, and the proceedings in courts of justice, had assumed immense development under his

pen, he reserved what he had written to introduce it in a future historical and theoretical dissertation, a specimen of which we shall insert in another part of this work, when we come to speak of his writings on speculative politics *.

In the first of the letters composing this work, Mirabeau thus expresses himself—

" People go to law here as they do everywhere else: they go to law for property; they go to law for vanity and for honour; and what is still more strange, a man goes to law to obtain leave to see his wife, who is not

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* The autograph manuscript, in our possession, bears this title:— " Letters written by a former Magistrate to a friend, upon the Lawsuit of the Count of Mirabeau."

These letters, three in number, are dated March 8th and 29th, and April 10th 1783, and they contain a hundred and five pages. Mirabeau, no doubt, alluded to this work when he said:—

" I see and know every thing. The field of all these intrigues is too confined for it to be necessary for me to describe them. But I give notice that a day will come when the whole nation shall know their history, and my voice, long tried in the utterance of bold truths, shall divulge every particular of the most odious plots that ever disgraced the legal profession and the temple of justice." See p. 3, of a publication entitled, " Reply to Madame de Mirabeau's pleading, &c., of the 10th of June 1783;" page 3, of " Observations by the Count of Mirabeau upon certain parts of his Case;" and page 14, of the prefaces to " The Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed, at the moment of its publication, by especial order of the Keeper of the Seals, and republished from respect to the King and to justice, together with a conversation on this subject between the Keeper of the Seals and the Count of Mirabeau." One volume 8vo. 1784.

judicially separated from him, to speak to her, and to offer her explanations.

"This is a literal fact: and such a case is now pending at Aix, constituting a judicial problem of immense difficulty, a law-suit of very great importance, and even a party question.

"It appears singular to reasonable people, that litigation concerning the affairs of married life should be carried on in courts of justice, and such matters submitted to the tortuous intrigues of lawyers, and the inexhaustible resources of chicanery. Nor is it less singular that a husband, whose wife has preferred no judicial complaint against him, should be obliged to apply to the law courts for access to her presence. But the strangest thing of all is, that among the thousands of works on jurisprudence in our libraries, neither a law nor even a theory is to be found, fixing with clearness and precision, the rights of married people with regard to each other's person.

"More than twenty millions of inhabitants are living in France; all are interested in the laws of matrimony, if not as husbands and wives, at least as children and relatives. Nevertheless, neither magistrates nor citizens have any precise knowledge of the power of the conjugal tie. Each understands and draws it closer, according to his affections, his prejudices, or his interest.

"It is really curious to hear how such questions are

treated by husbands, wives, young people, old people, priests, judges, and barking lawyers. No two opinions are alike among individuals of the same sex, age, condition and species.

"The solemn and novel case now pending here, opens a vast field to debate, and must constitute a distinct epoch. Both parties will apparently explain the principles upon which they proceed. The decision will make a noise, and will be rigidly examined. It may, perhaps, lead to a law which, at the end of the eighteenth century, will at length specify in this country, what marriage really is.

"The husband who claims his wife, is one who was considered dead as regards his civil rights. His appearance caused almost as great a fright as that of a spectre interrupting the revels of a brilliant party. The wife's circle of friends have taken the alarm; they fear being dispersed for ever, and they affectionately close round the amiable woman who is their delight. Their charming queen is unwilling to awake, and end her dream of a too happy widowhood; and those who profit by her slumbers, rock her to prolong them.

"This husband who has risen from the dead, is called the Count of Mirabeau. His destiny is a never-ending tempest, and his life a romance. Perhaps I may sketch his portrait some day; it is now sufficient to tell you that he stepped out of his grave at Vin-

cennes two years ago; and after having caused a sentence to be quashed which condemned him to be beheaded for abduction of the wife of the old President Monnier, he has now applied to the courts of justice to get back his own wife.

"This step was little apprehended at first because he was known to be heavily chained, and tightly bound. Loaded with debts, the consequence of his misconduct in early life—stricken by prejudices consequent upon this misconduct, and more especially by the scheming and officious tales of those interested in his ruin—surrounded by enemies—injured, it is said, by his own father—obnoxious to the government, who attribute to his pen a work, purporting to be a posthumous writing upon *Lettres de Cachet* and state prisons, in which the truth must more than once have made the viziers and semi-viziers turn pale * :—he comes to a province in which he has few relatives left, few secret and not one avowed friend, to strive against the most influential family that it contains—against an individual at Aix, who does the honours of the town, and passes for giving the most delightful parties, and for having the most powerful friends and the best cook in the place. The resuscitated

* This work had appeared four months previously, that is to say in the beginning of November 1782. We shall give an account of it in Book XIV, as well as of the other published and unpublished works, written by Mirabeau in his youth.

husband must place great reliance on the justice of his cause and the impartiality of his judges to venture upon such a proceeding. But even under this supposition, it is difficult to account for his wish to have back a wife who cared nothing about him during his long misfortunes, but spent in pleasures and festivities those days which he passed in a dungeon.

" Many persons are surprised that he who has been accused of carrying off the wife of another, should peaceably allow his own wife to be taken and kept from him without any right or authority. If he is attached to her, as people suppose—a little gratuitously perhaps—why does he not seize her person? If he is not attached to her, wherefore does he desire to get her back? This riddle will be solved some day or other;—meanwhile, the suit is going on. Every body is reading with the greatest eagerness a statement published by this extraordinary man, of whom I hear daily so many strange, and even disgusting stories, that he could not, without infamy, dispense with a judicial inquiry, as by it alone he can clear his character.

" This first statement of his, which he has entitled ' Observations for the Count of Mirabeau,' is nothing more than a collection of his wife's letters to him, written at a period since which the husband and wife have never met. This collection assuredly forms a novel species of defence in a suit for a separation brought by a wife against her husband, as these letters

breathe the deepest and most lively tenderness. The Count Mirabeau has published them without any other comment than the following sentence, very energetic in its simplicity, which he has added to each letter transcribed:—

"'AND MADAME DE MIRABEAU HAS NEVER SEEN, SINCE SHE WROTE THE ABOVE LETTER, THE HUSBAND FROM WHOM IT IS NOW PRETENDED THAT SHE WISHES TO BE SEPARATED!'

"The epigraph to the statement is—

"'MAY GOD SOON BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN, FOR WE ARE NOT FORMED TO BE ASUNDER.'

"The letters are thus headed: 'Letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to her husband, who has never seen her since she wrote it.'

"The epigraph and the sentence under each letter, have been very successful. Good people say: THE QUESTION IS DECIDED BY THESE LETTERS. But those who are versed in judicial manœuvring maintain, on the contrary, that the Count of Mirabeau will certainly lose his cause; because they say Madame de Mirabeau would not plead against evidence unless she was sure of a party sufficiently strong to secure the victory. The instigators of these proceedings are, for the most part, unacquainted with the Count of Mirabeau, except from hearsay. Perhaps they hope he will lay himself open by some rash or angry measure. Be that as it may, people eagerly read his wife's letters

which are well written, full of feeling and thought, and—what is more remarkable in such a litigation between man and wife—very honourable to both.

"They prove beyond a doubt that Madame de Mirabeau was well pleased with her cohabitation; that she quitted her husband at his own request and for the purpose of serving him; and that she deeply lamented his absence from her. Now, this separation, which was to have lasted only a few days, has filled a lapse of eight years; and these letters further prove that she has pressed her husband twenty times to summon her to him, and that she never refused to join him until he lately claimed her return. Not only did she treat him as a cherished lover, worthy of being so,—and this at a period since which they have never seen each other, but on her husband's writing to her in harsh and angry terms concerning her stay in Paris, she made use of the following words in a letter which she sent to him in excuse of her conduct:—

"'I FEAR NOT TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION OF YOUR OWN TRIBUNAL; IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN JUST TOWARDS ME.'

"The correspondence appears to have been brought to a close by the anger of the husband, who being then confined by the King's order, vainly demanded his wife.

"Such is the necessary consequence of these letters, which form a strange contrast with those written by

both parties, since the Count of Mirabeau's return to Provence."

We have considered it our duty to suppress in our transcriptions from these letters some parts that are merely simple narrative, else we should greatly exceed the limits we have marked out for this subject, and produce the same disproportion that Mirabeau found in his work. On the other hand, notwithstanding the ability and logic, the erudition, certainly unexpected, and the admirable art which Mirabeau displayed in his statements published on the occasion of this suit, and which were still more eloquent, if possible, than those published at Pontarlier, we shall not follow the example of Peuchet and Vitry, who copied, one a hundred and fifty, the other two hundred pages, from the general collection of these productions, which, however, had obtained a very extensive circulation. Being firmly resolved, when under no compulsion from necessity, not to compile from nor reproduce documents already published, we shall content ourselves with relating, in a brief form, the principal incidents of this lawsuit, to which we shall add a very small number of extracts from the unpublished family correspondence.

We have already stated that the petitions of both parties were filed February 28th, and March 7th and 8th; and that Mirabeau immediately afterwards published "Observations" written in the most flattering and conciliatory tone towards his wife. On the 20th of

March, with that confidence in himself belonging to his character, and which was derived from an internal sense of his power rather than from the delusion of vanity—a confidence which attended and served him in every circumstance of his life, even political, he appeared before the judgment seat and pleaded his own cause. It is mentioned by his uncle in the following terms:—

"The Count pleaded yesterday; and, as you may well suppose, the court was crowded *. Marignane was there. At first he laughed; but in the middle he bent his head, and I am assured that he at last wept, as did the greater half of the audience †. Marignane said on

* Portalis, who swore he would not plead, appeared at the bar. He brought with him, as assistants, the Marquis of Marignane, and some of the Coryphei of his party. The audience were as numerous as the court could possibly contain, and they would have been suffocated if the lieutenant had not allowed the windows to be burst open. The Count of Mirabeau had no one with him but Lord Peterborough and two other English friends; not a single Frenchman daring to appear by his side. *Unpublished account by Mirabeau, under the title of "Letters written by a former Magistrate,"* &c.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 21st 1783.

"The Marquis of Marignane was greatly embarrassed. It is singular that he did not seem aware how critical his situation was, and how immoral the course he was pursuing. At first he looked at his son-in-law with a sneer; soon afterwards he turned away his head; he then bent it towards the ground, and his features underwent a change. He at length appeared so deeply affected, that the impression among the audience was that he was about to rise, embrace his son-in-law, and take him home with him. This was the general wish; and it appears to me that such a proceeding would have been ho-

leaving the court:—'He pleaded with great gentleness and moderation;' and in fact, this man, formed for out-of-the-way things, found out the secret of administering a strong dose of flattery to his father-in-law, and his wife, at the same time that he made them appear absurd *. Your son forced from him a confession that he had evinced decency and moderation, adding that the only thing wanting was truth. But to speak candidly, every disinterested person was of opinion that this *finale* might have been omitted †."

Mirabeau's personal appearance in court greatly displeased his father.

"So then, the Count is at his apogee! for of all the

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nourable to both, especially to M. de Marignane, who would have left to his son-in-law the glory of speaking well, and reserved to himself that of doing well. But so decisive a step was not in the nature of so weak-minded a man." *Unpublished account already mentioned.*

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 22nd 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 24th 1783.

Many people blame the Count for making this public display. But he seems greatly to have gained by it; and to these censurers it might be said, "*Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse.*" The number of the pleader's adherents increased tenfold; he seems to have kindled great enthusiasm. * * * * The Count's pleading was applauded by a general clapping of hands, from which he attempted to escape, but it pursued him to his carriage, to which he was almost carried. You may easily suppose that these unfortunate clappings of hands seemed to M. de Marignane so many buffets applied to his cheeks. *Unpublished account already mentioned.*

facilities and jovialities that Providence has placed within his reach, he always has recourse to the most noisy. He pleads his cause in person; he publishes Cases, and no doubt, people tell him that all this is very meritorious, and that he is as superior to his fellows, the other dealers in words I mean, as stars are to wild poppies. And, seeing the rapidity and rarity of individuals of his species, he adds, *in petto*, that he must be a prodigy. He goes speechifying with his hat upon his head, and they all tell him that it is best so to do; but I wish his judges were not men, and that his voice had the same power as that of the united Greeks, when their shouts of joy, in the name of the freedom announced by the Romans, made the birds fall from the sky. But I fear that he will reap no other benefit from it than the Dutch compliment paid to Cardinal Polignac, when he made a fine speech at St. Gertruidenberg: 'In truth it seems that the reverend clergyman has received a very good education *.'

"Although I had some difficulty to stomach the idea of the grandson of our father, whom we have seen pass along the *course*, every body there, high and low, taking off their hats to him—although, as I say, I did not exactly relish the thought of this grandson appearing at the bar of the court, disputing their practice with

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 23rd 1783.

the dealers in chicanery; I thought to myself a little while after, that Louis XIV would be somewhat more surprised at seeing the wife of his second successor clad in a peasant's garb with an apron tied before her, without retinue, or pages, or a single attendant, running through the palace and across the terraces, telling the first young puppy she meets to hand her on, and he handing her no further than the bottom of the stairs. Other times, other customs * !"

The Marquis positively refused to believe in his son's moderation.

" If this man, ferocious even in his caresses, could reform his harsh and cutting mode of speech, and

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 26th 1782.

Whilst the Marquis was venting his ill humour in this angry passage, suggested by the amusements of the young queen of France, Mirabeau, by a singular coincidence, paid the latter a homage, the occasion of which was the presence of the archduke of Milan, brother of Marie Antoinette. " Who among you," said he, " if he would consecrate the living image of justice, and embellish it with all the charms of beauty, would not take the august effigy of our queen? A fortunate chance here shows us her adored features, retraced by nature itself, the greatest, the only painter for feeling hearts. We have all, with delight, caught at this striking resemblance; and great is the confidence my heart derives from it! What happier prognostic could there be for this solemn cause, which must astonish those whose supreme rank only displays the more vividly their modest habits, and the concord and domestic virtues of which they offer such affecting examples!" *Reply to the pleading of the Countess of Mirabeau*, p. 7.

transform his beautiful style into my unformed style, it would be much better for him *."

Soon after this he wrote—

" This gentleman is just where he wished to be, that is to say, in a situation to be able to howl and to scribble; but he will lose all in a single speech, and then it will be said, as you will see, that I and those about me, have twisted his neck †. All is my own fault, if I am to believe my brother, who gives me some rude buffets by each post. I should never have thought his mind so capable of being shaken, and of forgetfulness and passion; or that he would have seen only through the eyes of that fellow, by whose rapacious and turbulent notions he is harassed and propelled ‡."

The Marquis now believed or pretended to believe, that Mirabeau was not sincere in his wish for a restitution of conjugal rights.

" I tell you that he feels a repugnance to live with his wife. His only object has been to make a noise, hoping thereby to deceive the public, and pass himself off for a saint. I well knew that he was not sincere, because the flash of lightning which blackens even white clouds, also shows the blackness of the others §.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, to Madame du Saillant, dated April 22nd 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 18th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 29th 1783.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 8th 1783.

"Never in your life," replied the Bailli, "have you believed in proper time, although you have often said, 'the Bailli is always right.'" How often must the reader have made the same reflection!

"You think me prejudiced, but I can assure you that your son had the greatest wish to have back his wife; thanks, however, to a set of letters not written by you but coming from your house, it was known that you would not interfere in the business, and people believed what pleased them most. He has been insulted in a thousand different ways. Unless you deem him physically mad, what interest could he have in bringing himself before the public in this manner? In these proceedings, I myself cannot help perceiving, as plainly as day-light at noon in the month of June, that, during the whole course of his cohabitation with his wife, he evinced much more moderation in essential points than I should have done. Think you that he has not felt the chastisement inflicted upon him? I know nothing of your figurative style, which you inflict upon me by far too often for my comprehension. What do you mean by lightning blackening or whitening clouds?... I know not what this can have to do with the matter; but I know that he has a due sense of his situation, and will in spite of himself, and without being able to prevent it, extinguish his race, because that which exists in a marriage contract cannot be retracted.

"But let me tell you, that knowing you as I do, I never thought you could have written so many letters

of this description to a man*, of whose selfishness and narrow mind you were well aware. You knew him to be one of those who care for nothing but the pleasures and amusements of the moment, to whom domestic and social consequences are nothing, and who, as you said of this one yourself, are those true inhabitants of cities, those men of the Eclogue, for whom the heavens and space form but a circumference of three yards. You assert that I have proof of all you have written, but I really have none, not even of the very least thing†"

Mirabeau's demand of "provisional reunion," was granted by a judgment of the 24th of March, which ordered the young wife to return to her husband in three days, or else retire to a convent and receive his visits there.

"Having gained the provisional judgment, we proposed either that she should go to a convent, where she should not see her husband, unless she sent for him; but on condition that she should receive no other visiter whatever, except her father,—or else that she should remain at her father's house and see her husband there. Both alternatives were peremptorily rejected, and a proposal made in return, that her husband should suffer himself to be condemned by a *decree of expedi-*

* The Marquis of Marignane.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 15th 1783.

ency, and renounce his rights as a husband. Perhaps I might have consented to this, if they had fixed a limit of one, two, or even three years; but it was for ever. Meanwhile they made a great splutter about the terrible statement they were going to publish; they showed your letters to many people; they uttered calumnies against your son and even against ourselves. Marignane went so far as to say that lawsuits were natural to us—you against your wife, and I against my niece*, (although with regard to this latter and me, there never was any lawsuit between us). But we might answer him, that his daughter wanted to be separated, and that she is the daughter of a separated wife†, and the grand-daughter of a separated wife‡."

Threats of a defamatory publication were made long before the instance began, and the most bitter animosity was displayed. All this was the more unjust to Mirabeau, because, after the publication of his "Observations," written in a conciliatory spirit, having made in open court a speech very honourable to his wife, to

* A petition was filed against the Bailli by Madame de Cabris, who wrongfully pretended that he was bound to supply her with a supplemental dower.

† The Marchioness of Marignane, had been separated from her husband more than five and twenty years.—*Case for the Grand Council, suppressed at the moment of its publication, &c.*, p. 149.

‡ Madame de Maliverney lived in a state of separation before she became a widow.

prevent the effect of this speech from being confined to the limited audience in whose presence it was delivered, he had it printed and distributed throughout the province*.

All these attempts at an amicable arrangement were of no avail.

"At last we have gone so far as to propose a fresh arbitration of four noblemen, or four magistrates; but Gassier has lost both his time and his trouble†."

With whatever indifference the Marquis of Mirabeau may first have regarded the threat to publish his letters, he was soon brought to think otherwise; not by the persuasion of others—for he was never known

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* Two other publications, equally moderate, followed; the first was, "*A summary of the Demand presented by the Countess of Mirabeau to stay Proceedings.*" Aix, J. David, 1783, four pages 8vo; the second was, "*Petition of the Count of Mirabeau,*" &c. Aix, J. David, 1783, 39 pages 4to. But Mirabeau's moderation was turned against himself.

"It is impossible for me not to grieve when I see that they have turned against me almost every action of mine that does me honour, and all my acts of moderation. My lawsuit especially, has not escaped the fatality of this misfortune. Have they not turned against me the entreaties which preceded the commencement of the suit? Have they not said, 'He is a husband, and he supplicates; therefore he is guilty?' My silence was attributed to a sense of my own unworthiness; my consent to every mediation to despair of my cause."—*Observations of the Count of Mirabeau upon a part of his Cause,* &c. page 39.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783. Gassier was a skilful advocate, and a friend to both families.

to obey anybody but himself—but by deep and serious reflection. He therefore attempted, more on his own account than from any good-feeling towards his son, to prevent their publication. Even on the previous 10th of January *, he had written to his daughter-in-law a very witty and playful letter, which had produced a bad effect, and was openly blamed by the Bailli †. On the 12th of April ‡ following, he wrote to the

* Petition of the Count of Mirabeau, &c. Aix, J. David, 1783, p. 18.

† With due deference, although I am satisfied with all you have done, and thought, and written in this letter, I am not very glad that you have taken the matter in jest, in your reply to your daughter-in-law. There is no subject here for laughter, and it is dangerous to jest with the Marignanes."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 17th* 1783.

" All our friends think this tone of jesting with the daughter quite out of place. I saw her yesterday at her father's, he having returned my visit. She complained, and with just reason, that you had written to her in jest upon a subject that was no jesting matter. She added, that, at the bottom, you did not seem to take any very great interest in the business."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 19th* 1783.

Shortly after this, the Bailli, pursuing the very measure he had recommended to his brother, wrote a serious and dignified letter to the Countess of Mirabeau, who replied in a very improper manner. Pp. 31 and 38 of " Petition of the Count of Mirabeau, &c."

‡ Ibid. p. 26.

§ Observations upon a Calumnious Libel, entitled " Case for Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau," &c. Aix, J. David, 1783, p. 18.

" As I have given you, or rather my son, full authority, so far as I am concerned, to take judicial steps, I have thought proper, on taking leave of peaceful measures, to write a serious, grave, and

father of the Countess * two letters, admirable for dignified and eloquent reasoning. Our only reason for not inserting these letters here, is to avoid failing in the engagement we have taken, not to use, except in cases of absolute necessity, any documents already published.

But there is another very remarkable letter on the same subject, written by the Marquis of Mirabeau to his brother, and this we feel called upon to transcribe, because it has never been published.

" Marignane has always been considered a man of known honour, and until I see it, I never can believe that he will act so basely as to publish letters written in confidential and domestic intimacy, on the occasion of my son's misconduct. I had rather he were guilty of such a thing than I. It is, I think, not a very honourable mode of accounting for a repugnance to write †.

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strong letter, and yet pacific, as regards her own interests. Enclosed is a copy, with which you will be satisfied."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau dated February 25th* 1783.

* " I wrote to the Marquis of Marignane a letter, which the President d'Entrecasteaux considers a master-piece. This is all my reply." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 22nd* 1783.

† This " repugnance" is explained by the following passage in a letter, dated two years previously, June 5th 1781, from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant :—

" I am often held back while I wish to write, especially to my father-in-law, because I know that *every thing remains*, and I always fear that something may escape from my pen that may be revived some day or other, and become a source of annoyance to us."

Did he, on account of the measures he had taken, anticipate the consequences of writing? But what has this to do with the case? Why should he offer me such an insult, and make me my son's accuser, whilst the courts of justice would reject me, as not qualified by law to give an opinion for or against him?

"How could he look for my evidence in letters written to the common father of our children? *Homo et humanitatis expers, et vitæ communis ignarus!* should I have a right to exclaim with a memorable jurisconsult, *at etiam literas*, &c.* Could he invoke the rights of lawful defence? But this is of no consequence in the present case. Everybody knows that my son misconducted himself in earlier life, and that I took every possible precaution to stop the effects of his misconduct. To do this, I was necessarily obliged to concert measures with his father-in-law. I then spoke, according to the period, and to him, whom I considered as deeply interested in the matter as I was. Nobody ever doubted my grief under the affliction of these accumulated evils; but I flatter myself that people have also observed

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The publication of the atrocious statement against Mirabeau, proved that he might also have said that in the Marignane family *every thing remained;* that there was more of calculation and prudence, than of negligence and good faith, in her repugnance to reply; and that the Marquis was right in considering it the "consequences of the measures taken" by this family.

* At the very time when the father was applying to his son's adversaries, this eloquent and often-quoted exclamation of the Roman orator, Mirabeau had taken it as his motto in his reply, entitled "Observations upon a Calumnious Libel, &c.

the precautions I took to observe public decency, and my repugnance basely to expose my domestic disgrace. Perhaps I yielded to confidential intercourse without due caution in my choice of expressions; but the intercourse was with a man as interested as I was in not dishonouring the father of his grandson, who was then alive. Could I have foreseen that he would one day have the barbarity to convert into a handle against my son, the outpourings of a justly irritated father?

"It is known at present that many of the charges against my son are without proof, and that others have been greatly exaggerated. Nothing now remains but offences against myself personally, and these I have sincerely and fully forgiven. I yielded to the entreaties of my children, and to the testimony of his repentance. I never thought that any authority should avenge, but only be just and protect; and it was my opinion that no family breach should be final. In the persuasion that a father's pardon must necessarily secure a total restoration, I helped to efface the marks of my son's past imprudence; and I sent him to you because you were always a second father to my children.

"Now, in the present business, my name ought not to appear in any form, and yet the security of the most confidential intercourse is violated in my person, in order to make me appear publicly as my son's accuser. When I believed him faulty, and declared him such to a man with whom I was bound to concert measures for his

correction, I endeavoured to withdraw him from society, to whom we are responsible for our actions and the exercise of our authority. When at a subsequent period, after having kept him with me for a time, I placed him in a situation to pursue a better course, it must have been inferred that I considered him in a condition to make amends for the past. The terms in which a man has expressed himself during a moment of past alarm, determines nothing with regard to the present; and no good can be derived from my letters, written formerly, when the question presented for solution is, whether or not he ought to be separated, by law, from his wife.

" Though very inexperienced in the question of a husband claiming his wife, I have heard say that dissipation authorises a separation of property; but that ill-usage, alone, authorises a separation from bed and board. With reference to the first point, Madame de Mirabeau enjoys a separation of property, and no attempt is made to meddle with this arrangement. On the subject of ill-usage, much may have been invented, presumed, and reported against a young man displaying too much fire at all times; but my daughter-in-law has always exonerated him from every imputation on this score. She wrote this to me twice: in 1774, before she came to reside with me, and two years after her marriage. *Non ego litteras, et si jure poteram*, &c.

"To what can such animosity tend? And on what expectation will they be wanting in natural respect to me, to such a degree as to place me before the public in the light of my son's accuser, and his implacable enemy, at the very time I am holding out a helping hand to him? From what I wrote during the time of his misconduct, do they expect to make people infer that he is a monster to whom a young wife is not to be entrusted? For the last six months, he has appeared among his fellow-citizens, each of whom may now compare him with what he was in his more youthful days, and thereby judge him. But we are not in a country of anthropophagi; and he does not want to take his wife to another land, or separate her from her relatives and friends. You were good enough to offer her a house, of which she should be the mistress, and you remain the master; and this, too, in a province where nobody ever called in question your justice and benevolence.

"I will admit that such considerations may have no weight with persons who have mistaken fear and repugnance for reasons; but judges who are at the feet of the law cannot step beyond its limits; and were they even such men as are elsewhere termed jurymen, they would not decide concerning a man's whole future life, his natural and acquired rights, his posterity — concerning every thing, in short, belonging to him, according to impressions made, during his youthful errors, by the disclosure of confidential

domestic communications. And why, again, supposing such things legal, should we not be considered something in these last considerations? Has our name deserved erasure from the list of our fellow-countrymen? We have never done them evil, nor disgraced them; and if the house of Marignane has obtained so much influence, and so many adherents in the same country, it is also upon its extinction as well as upon ours, that the judges will have to decide,—if they yield to fleeting impressions. The first duty of a citizen is to give back to his country that which he received from it;—this remains. Minor repugnances, irritating disappointments, mutual charity, and other ingredients employed by the passions of the day in compounding the transient agitations of life, are nothing but wind and smoke compared with the higher considerations, and lasting effects which result from the fulfilment of our first duty.

. "It does not become me, being at so great a distance, to speak of the cause itself; I have only to complain of the offence of charging me before the public, and of the abuse of my confidence. Let the base act of those I have, at all times, kindly and affectionately treated, together with the reward I have received from them, remain. If it deprives them for ever of the confidence of all men of honour—if people do not show them the respect which they consider themselves justified in refusing to an afflicted and irreproachable old man, who

never injured them, but, on the contrary, always stood forward to guard them against any thing that could trouble their domestic peace, let them not accuse external objects, but the order of nature which requires that mankind should reap, always, or nearly so, that which they have sown. I have erred by misplaced confidence, and I am severely punished for my error; but there would be some difficulty in bringing home to me the charge of having betrayed any body's confidence, or of having wilfully done, or wished to do unto others, that which I would not they should do unto me.

"I have been writing to you as of a positive fact, whilst I cannot yet believe in its existence. If however the thing is to take place, my counsel, whose written opinions I will send you in due form, think I can obtain redress at law, and oppose the printing and publication, if there is time, or else claim back the original letters, and have the statements and extracts suppressed. If this is also the opinion of your counsel, I hereby authorise you to take the necessary steps in my name. Not but that my pacific intentions are the same as before—not but that any act of hostility would be exceedingly painful to me; but I perceive, though very late, that such a disposition of the heart is not the one that proceeds the most rapidly to the end sought; quite the reverse; and that it ultimately leads us to neglect ourselves as well as to make others forget what we owe to ourselves, and how much of deference, respect, and equitable reciprocity is our due.

"Farewell! May God reward you for your exertions, expense, and trouble, which your family can never repay *."

All was, however, useless: the fatal statement appeared †. The following is an acount by Mirabeau of the circumstances which preceded its circulation.

"Pausanias relates that at thirty stadia from the city of Sparta was to be seen a statue of Chastity, raised by Icarius on the following occasion:

"Icarius having bestowed the hand of his daughter upon Ulysses tried, but ineffectually, to persuade his son-in-law to remain and settle at Sparta. Frustrated in his hope, he tried what he could do with his daughter, whom he intreated not to leave him; and when she set out with her husband for Ithaca, he followed her car, beseeching her to return. Ulysses, weary of such importunity, told her to choose between her father and her husband, leaving it to her own free choice either to proceed with him to Ithaca or to return to Sparta with her father. The fair Penelope drew her veil over her face which was suffused with blushes. Icarius understood this mute reply, and allowed his daughter to depart with her husband; but being much struck with the confusion in which he had seen her, he dedicated a statue to Chastity, placing it on the very spot

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

† It was entitled, "Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau." Aix, J. B. Mourel, 1783; 162 pages quarto.

where Penelope had covered her face with a veil, which, from that period, every woman was directed to wear.

" The above is a specimen of beautiful antiquity; the following is modern.

" Just as Madame de Mirabeau was about to *communicate* the diabolical statement which she has published, she sent a copy of it to the Bailli of Mirabeau, by the Marquis of Castellane-Mazaugue. A very few minutes after she sent for it back, and repeated the message several times, before the Bailli could possibly have read it. Gassier, who felt how critical this moment was, saw the parties frequently during the day. For the third time, he proposed an arbitration by four noblemen. Messrs. de Mirabeau consented. Madame de Mirabeau wept, and did not seem disposed to reject the offer of the ambassador, when her attorney, who is also that of the De Grasse family, came in and informed her that all would be lost if the statement were not *communicated* immediately; (this statement was the pledge of a war of extermination;) that her counsel would desert her cause because they were *certain* that an answer to this statement was already printed, and would appear first, if the communication was delayed an instant, the only object of the offer of arbitration, being to gain time.

" Three times the attorney had come to the door of the room, and Madame de Crose * had refused him

* The Marquis of Marignane's particular friend.

admittance. This lady had guessed the object of his mission, and was anxious, at any price, to put an end to the lawsuit which made M. de Marignane very unhappy, and was far from doing him honour. But the fourth time Madame de Grasse of Bar, M. de Marignane's sister, opened the fatal door, and the angel of peace was put to flight by the man in black. All had been prepared, and the firebrand of an attorney had no sooner obtained leave to *communicate*, than a copy of the statement was served on the Mirabeau family *."

Let us see what the Bailli says upon the subject.

"The statement has appeared at last, and it is of a nature which I am persuaded, calls for your interference. You are bound in honour to complain of this breach of confidence, for your letters are published, and form the greater portion of this production which contains a hundred and sixty pages.

"You know, my dear brother, that I never hazard assertions. But I now assure you, from facts and articles, and written characters which I well know, that your son is justified in having stated, in his

* Extract from Mirabeau's unpublished account already mentioned, entitled "Letters from a former Magistrate," &c.

"Madame de Mirabeau spent the whole of that day in tears; three times she asked for peace; and the fatal statement published in her name was obtained from her, by a trick played off upon her by an attorney in the interest of the covetous collaterals, whom the public have designated as the authors of the lawsuit."—*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication*, &c.

pleading, that every body has, perhaps, reason to complain of him with the sole exception of her to whom his conduct has always been the most generous. I should not, upon his sole authority, believe what I have stated; but I have unquestionable evidence, verbal, from individuals worthy of credit, and written, which admits not of doubt.

"This infamous statement is a decidedly calumnious libel, scarcely at all touching upon the question at issue, but the object of which is to accuse your son of all sorts of crimes; the whole founded upon letters written by you to Marignane, and to that unworthy woman, who compares them to her own letters, which we have transcribed, and which do her a thousand times more honour than she deserves,—whilst those written by you are full of error and exaggeration, and prove that you were deceived not only by the hypocrites about you, but by those very individuals who now make use of what they then made you write. We are now going to examine whether a man cannot be prosecuted for having basely betrayed the confidence of an irritated father, who confidentially states his grievances to individuals who have the same interests as himself, and is not, consequently, very nice in his expressions. I cannot, neither would I if I could, prevent your son at present from carrying matters to extremities.

"You were wrong, I think, in not letting me know, from the very beginning, that you had written such

letters. We might then have taken measures to have prevented their being made use of. But the evil is committed, and there is one passage which I think will lead to the shedding of blood; for in it you assert that your son will not seek *for battles*, because there are none, and *because he does not like battles*. I know not how far this is true; but it may turn out that you are mistaken, and the publication of this passage may induce him to prove the contrary *."

The Marquis soon after wrote—

" I well know that he who does not succeed is always in the wrong, and this is the first sentence in La Chatre's memoirs; but they who know that this woman has always been so surrounded, that it was impossible to speak to her without witnesses, and that her husband has never been able to obtain a conference with her, and they who have witnessed the insolence of her family, well know that all the blame attachés to them. Had the woman granted conferences, and declared that she would not live with her husband again, I would have prevented him, and I should have found no difficulty in doing so, from persevering to obtain her by law; which, even in case of success, would lead to nothing, for we would not take her now.

" I advise him to say that this is his last defence; that he has no desire to force any body's affections; and that

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

whatever the judgment may be, he declares that his wife shall herself fix her situation *."

The libellous statement against Mirabeau being once published, all hope of conciliation was at an end.

"The fatal publication has appeared, and has disgusted every person of respectability, even those who were friends of the Marignanes. It is an abominable compound of lies and calumnies, all foreign to the cause, but uttered merely to defame, and render a reconciliation impossible. Your letters constituted the greater portion of this production; the commentary was vomited forth from hell †. There must be no further reply except in contradiction of these infamous assertions, and not to claim a woman who, if you believe me, ought never again to enter our mother's house. Let us mention her no more ‡!"

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 22nd 1783.

† And yet it is from this statement as much as and even more than from the Vincennes correspondence, that the materials of Mirabeau's private life have been taken by all his biographers.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 11th 1783. We find in a letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, the effect produced upon him by the disclosure of his most confidential communications, a proceeding so base that at first he would not believe it possible, notwithstanding the notice and threats of which we have given an account in the text.

"The very thought of this atrocious publication made me turn pale for the first time in my life. Although hardened and covered with scars, I found myself for a moment too unhappy, for I do not tell you of all the agony I endured, especially that sort of discou-

What have we further to say? What useful details could we add to this energetic and just estimate of one of the most atrocious libels ever dictated by hatred? Mirabeau, however, still kept his temper. In a short time he published a reply * comparatively moderate, and rich in eloquence. He pointed out what was unnecessarily odious in the publication of his father's letters †,

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ragement which questions Providence and says to it, 'August Protector of the cedar and the shrub, what wilt thou do with me?'"—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated June 9th* 1783.

However base the calumnies contained in this statement, it seems that the parties subsequently found means to go even beyond them.

"They have given it greater development in their pleadings, and ill-usage forms one of their most affecting episodes. Listen to what they have dared to plead; I do not change a single word, but transcribe it from notes taken at the hearing, and certified by the advocate who assisted me," &c.—*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication,* &c. p. 168.

* Observations upon a calumnious libel entitled, "Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau." Aix, J. David 1783; 202 pages 4to; followed by Counsel's opinion forming 67 pages; Aix, A. Adibert, 1783.

† To form an idea of the unparalleled vindictiveness of Mirabeau's adversaries and of their unreasonableness, bad faith, and the little trouble they took to colour their insults, the reader should examine the mode in which they attempted to justify their publication of letters, placing a father in the light of his son's calumniator.

"What!" said they, "does it become those who FIRST SET THE EXAMPLE OF COMMUNICATING LETTERS, WITHOUT NECESSITY, to appeal to the principles of delicacy and honour?"—*Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau.*

The absurdity of such a defence, and the fallacy of such an argu-

of which he proved, with as much skill as power, the exaggerations and errors. He discussed and refuted,

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ment are self-evident; for the letters published by Mirabeau did honour to his wife, whilst those which she published threw disgrace upon him. He accordingly exclaimed:

"You drive an unhappy woman to war without giving her a single specious reason for doing so! You force her to sanction an infamous proceeding, which you cannot even attempt to defend without your principles falling upon your own heads and crushing you. I have communicated, you say, my wife's letters without necessity! without necessity! * * * * Why then did you accuse me, in her name, of having destroyed in her bosom, all conjugal affection? Was it unjust that I should show the existence of conjugal affection on her part at the period we quitted each other? You pretended that it was impossible my wife could bear my presence; to which I replied by showing the regret she had expressed at our separation. You insisted upon it that I had ill used her, and I showed by her own testimony, that I had always acted with justice and tenderness towards her. Was it thus that I broke the seal of domestic secrets? Ought my wife's attachment to me to constitute a secret—a mystery? Was I to let people believe that I had not deserved it—that it had been taken from me? What have I said that could make her blush? * * * Ah! if she pretends that she has reason to complain, let her look around her—let her accuse those who suppose she has the art of feigning to such a degree that she can describe with the appearance of truth that pleased the public so much, feelings which she does not possess! Let her accuse those who maintain that her heart belied her tongue and her pen—that she loved me not, but looked upon me with dread at the very moment she said, 'I adore thee!' Let her look with horror upon those who have induced her to sign such strange assertions! They alone have calumniated and defamed her, by imputing to her the basest duplicity—by accusing her of having degraded herself so far as even to trace in her letters the oath of eternal love, to the unworthy husband whom she had the strongest reason to hate. * * * * * * In sum, what-

one by one, the calumnious charges wantonly brought against him. He maintained, and with truth, that before imprisonment and exile had separated him from his wife, whom he has not since beheld, she never had occasion to charge him with a single direct and serious wrong. He proved, by facts and by text, that in neither law nor equity, was she entitled to a separation, which the courts of justice granted only in cases of real and substantiated ill usage. As for the prosecution at Pontarlier, the legal consequences of which he ably disposed of on the ground of his having voluntarily given himself up, whereby the judgment had been set aside and its very object done away by compromise, and by the death of the complainant,—Mirabeau, in extenuation of its moral consequences, pleaded his extreme youth, and the abandonment in which his wife's obstinacy had left him; drawing a striking, though measured comparison between his own sufferings, and the notorious life of pleasure and dissipation led by his wife for eight years past; she having instituted this suit merely to continue the enjoyments of such life.

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ever may happen, I published Madame de Mirabeau's letters which belonged to me, even exclusively, because they were written to me. These letters, which contain means of defence, and not of attack, (and what defence?) these letters which do honour to her who formed them, instead of defaming her—these letters which only prove feelings of which a wife ought to be proud:—these letters are decisive in the suit, which they could and ought to have prevented."—*Observations upon a Calumnious Libel*, &c. pp. 35, 36, and 37.

Lastly, calling to mind the supplicating * manner in which he had urged his claims, and the praises he had

* What have I done?—what have I said since the existence of this fatal lawsuit, for which they have not reason to thank me? I have begged, I have entreated, I have waited patiently; I have received insults with calmness, and redressed them with moderation; I have praised my father-in-law, and have extolled my wife. * * * * * * I have claimed her, it is true!—but was I not bound to do so before God and man? Did I claim her with rudeness, with hauteur, or with precipitation? Whither ought I to have gone to show my regeneration, if not to my native country? To what witnesses did I owe the first satisfaction, if not to my countrymen? What land has a greater claim to the homage of my repentance, to the atonement of my errors and the wrongs I have committed, than that which was the cradle of my forefathers, where, besides, so many matters require my presence, and where my presence constituted the necessary pledge to my too numerous creditors? How was it possible for me to come hither, and remain so near my wife, without offering to her the tribute of my first feelings? Have I done any thing else?"

"Far from making any attempt upon her freedom, I asked only to see her. This was refused me, and the refusal accompanied with insult. All my demands were rejected, and I was declared, without return and *for ever*, cast off by my adopted family and my wife was *for ever* taken from me..... And these people boast of their moderation!—and they complain of being *forced* to speak! ..... *Forced*, are they?—..... And who are *forced*, then, to refuse all conference, all measures of conciliation?—to heap insult upon insult?—to publish, *as a first production*, a string of horrible calumnies?—to stab me with the hand of an angry father?"—*Observations upon a Calumnious Libel*, &c.

A remarkable fact is, that the plan and tone of this justification was suggested by the Marquis of Mirabeau himself, who did not the less persist in his habit of blaming every thing done by his son—

"I think, for my part, that if the Count took care to soften matters, instead of making them worse—to receive insults with calmness, redress them with moderation; ask in what place he shall

bestowed upon his father-in-law, and his wife, he pointed out the contrast between his own conduct and their hasty rejection of him and the baseness of their insults.

After the publication of this statement, Mirabeau appeared before the Grand Chamber *, and pleaded

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display a sincere regeneration, if it be not in his native country; to what witnesses he owes his first satisfaction, if it be not to his countrymen; and what country has a greater right to his services than the cradle of his forefathers; and how it was possible he could be so near his wife without paying her the homage of the return of his first feelings; whether he has done any thing else; and far far from making an attempt upon her liberty, he only demands that of seeing her:—I think they will find great difficulty in obtaining a a separation."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March* 23*rd* 1783.

* The grand chamber is loudly against us, and it is impossible to see a stronger example of the effect produced in a small town by keeping open-house, and enjoying great influence. *Letter from the Bailli above quoted, dated April* 11*th.*

"What would you have? The Marignanes have everybody on their side, and we are here without relatives, as your mother is not now in this part of the country, my mother's family, or, at least, the branch to which she belonged, is extinct. My grandmother, Elizabeth of Rochemore, was from Languedoc; my great-grandmother, Anne of Pontevès, was the last of an extinct race; my great-great-grandmother, Margaret of Glandevès was thesame. Thus we are isolated; your father was never in this part of the country, where there is a provincial administration, and the local nobles fill the offices of Procureur du Roi, Joint Procurator, Syndic of the Nobility, &c. Our adversaries have held these appointments, and hold them still; this gives them a great power, which we do not possess, and which operates against us."—*Unpublished Letter from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated June* 23*rd* 1783.

there in person, on the 23rd of May *, and the 17th † and 19th of June, with a power rarely offensive. Being, however, irritated at last by the calumnies before published, and verbally repeated in Court, he quoted in reply to the accusations of having ill-used his wife, a letter, dated May 28th 1774, which proved a grievous fault on the part of his wife, and a generous pardon on his. Being purposely provoked by a formal denial of this fact, and defied to prove the existence of such a letter, he produced, read, and commented upon it. His adversaries in their turn, read and commented upon it, but without denying its authenticity, or dreaming, notwithstanding what has been asserted ‡, of presenting it as

* This pleading of the 23rd of May was published by extracts, in a "Reply to the Pleading of Madame de Mirabeau, of the 13th of June," Aix, A. Adibert, 1783. Mirabeau afterwards published "Observations by the Count of Mirabeau upon a part of his cause," Aix, A. Adibert, 1783, 43 pages, 4to; and "A Summary for the Count of Mirabeau," Aix, A. Adibert, 1783, 13 pages, 4to.

† Between a pleading in the name of his wife, pronounced the 13th of June, and the reply of the husband on the 17th, fresh attempts were made at accommodation. Acceptable conditions were not offered to Mirabeau until just before he went into court, in order that it might "enervate his eloquence." This he promised it should do; but the proposals being withdrawn the very next day, he did not discover the snare until he had fallen into it.

‡ See "Biographie Universelle," vol. xxxv. p. 450, first column. Others have written, and among them Cadet Gassicourt (p. 7 of the first edition, and p. 5 of the second), that, in 1774, Mirabeau forced his wife to write him this letter, BY THREATENING HER LIFE WITH A PISTOL. We declare that there is not the least ground for this falsehood too readily believed and repeated, but there is

matter of public defamation; a point which was seized, taken up, and brought forward, *ex officio*, by the public

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evidence to the contrary in a passage which we transcribe the more readily, because it is favourable to the celebrated Portalis who was Madame de Mirabeau's counsel.

"If *force* compelled you to accuse yourself by a written confession of an imaginary fault, I am the most abominable of men, and you the most unfortunate of victims. But think you that your single assertion will suffice?—especially as in your romance of ill-usage, you had quite forgotten this horrible instance of it!—especially as you have lived free during ten years, and already spent four months in prosecuting the present suit, without having ever complained of this atrocious act! What base and criminal coldness can have benumbed you with regard to the care of your honour! What a cowardly and ferocious tyrant must I be! What a monstrous assemblage of treachery, boldness, and wickedness, must fill my soul! Why did you not expose it entirely? You had already said too much not to fear everything—not to destroy me outright!..... Alas! in what a defile have you placed yourself? By what engagements are men to be bound in future if the articulation of the word *force* possessed the virtue of dissolving them! With this word, there is no bad action that could not be excused; and such would be the prestige of this word that there would no longer be any morality in human actions.... Oh! you depended upon other resources, but they have failed. It is notorious that you have conspired to find supporters of your denial: do not force me to trace the history of your plots and of your accomplices.

"A thousand and one stories have been circulated by Madame de Mirabeau and her adherents, concerning the manner in which the letter was written. Why then did she appear in Court without even one of the marvellous supporters she had obtained? Why did she not utter a single one of these tales? Did the fatal portfolio, which I opened before her, act as a Medusa's head to her? No, gentlemen; you may thank the talents and probity of her Counsel, for not having heard, in all its horrible details, the most atrocious and most calumnious of romances. He found it too absurd and too immoral;

prosecutor himself *, whose incredible partiality made him seize with avidity upon the pretence of an actual and flagrant instance of ill-usage, in order to present at least one grievance in this suit for a separation, in which a thousand were alleged without the least proof, and without their being able to stand for an instant against the overwhelming refutations of the accused

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he would not disgrace himself nor his profession by uttering it. I owe him the justice to state that, since the day when I accused him before you of having planned this lamentable suit, he has endeavoured to bring it to a close with a zeal that clearly shows how cruelly he had been deceived. This is the most noble revenge he could have taken for the charge I brought against him. This declaration, and this homage to truth are due to him." *Reply to the Pleading of Madame de Mirabeau*, pp. 36, 37, and 38.

Such was Mirabeau, and such was Portalis; but what can we say of a writer thoughtless enough to repeat, after a lapse of so many years, an infamous falsehood, so victoriously refuted in public documents, which he could have consulted as we have done.

At a later period, Mirabeau, in his "Case for the Count of Mirabeau suppressed at the moment of its publication," &c., pp. 120 and following, again alludes, with still greater energy, to the abominable falsehood of his having obtained this letter from his wife by violence.

* "Madame de Mirabeau's advocate did not dare to present this new fact as a ground of separation, nor propose it by petition, as prescribed by the ordinance of 1667, title II, art. 26. He felt that, after the horrible libel of the 6th of April, it was not for him to discuss how far the defences of the husband and wife, parties to this suit for a separation, ought to be moderated. Thus, this new ground for separation WAS FORMALLY PROPOSED AS SUCH BY THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR ALONE, who neither had, nor could have a right to add to Madame de Mirabeau's complaint." *Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication*, &c., p. 26.

party. Thus assisted, Mirabeau's opponents abandoned every point urged until now, and confined themselves to this one alone. In vain did Mirabeau show that the letter contained not the slightest evidence of such a crime; that in its production there was nothing defamatory *, but that it had been produced in the

* See "Observations by the Count of Mirabeau upon a part of his Cause," pp. 26, 27, 28. See also "*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed,*" *&c.*, pp. 63 to 71.

Prior to this incident which supplied a ground of separation, obtained during the arguments in Court, it was pretended that Madame de Mirabeau had been defamed by the petitions which her husband had filed in 1776, when he applied by letter to the Minister, M. de Malesherbes, as we have already stated. This accusation was easily set aside, for the Marquis himself had refuted it in one of his letters.

"With regard to the defamation, they adduce a libel to which they have given the name of Case, and I well know the history of this pretended Case. The young man was pleading his very bad cause before the minister; this led to very bad reasons, and these to a very bad form. But he was writing to the minister; and precisely on account of what I have just stated, he had no interest in publishing his defence. He only sent a copy of his letter to very bad hands (those of the Marchioness of Mirabeau who defended him). The whole, a long time after, was dished up in the form of a Case, by means of an opinion attached to it by a beggarly advocate named Groubert de Groubental. Such, at least, is what I was told at a period when no one attempted to justify him. Now, if it were true that he wrote everything contained in this Case—to accuse in secret speech or correspondence is not defaming, for defamation is disclosure and publicity. And, besides, on this head the Case is totally free from any such thing."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated April 3rd* 1783. Mirabeau writes in the same sense. See Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii, p. 354.

lawful interest of his defence. A decree of separation was the consequence; it was rendered on the 5th of July *.

Let us now look for some particulars in the Marquis's letters.

"The question is about to be tried. My brother informs me that his nephew defends himself like a devil, and knows more Latin than the bench and the bar put together—a thing I can readily believe. It is a fact that he has so twisted them all about, that most of the public are now on his side. This is the general version here; it is likewise what is stated in letters from the spot, and likewise from Grenoble and Avignon. What is still more strange, I receive the same information from Italy; but you will be less surprised at this when I tell you that the Archduke of Milan is at Aix †, with his consort, and has chosen

* This decree is published in the "Case of the Count of Mirabeau suppressed," &c., p. 72.

† This Archduke and Archduchess travelled *incogniti* under the names of the Count and Countess of Nellemburgh. On this occasion, the Marquis of Mirabeau wrote in another letter:—

"Thirty years ago, I had another brother at Avignon (Alexander Louis) likewise a man of energy, and who made me first try my hand in the good calling I have since pursued. He was at his wit's end, having received his portion as a younger son, and made but three mouthfuls of it. But lo and behold! it rained a Margrave, brother-in-law of the King of Prussia, and his wife, a very enlightened princess. They were going to Italy. Having taken a fancy to my brother, they obtained, from his generosity, his consent to accompany them. He went to Germany to reign, and we thus got rid of

to hear the pleadings. What glory for the grandson of our father * ! "

We find in the same letters mention of a circumstance hitherto known by tradition only; and the truth of which was even doubted when Portalis, Madame de Mirabeau's counsel, had reached a high political station.

" Your brother's adverse parties are madder than he is, which is saying all. They are overrunning this country with intrigues, clamours, and atrocious publications, which are to be reprinted in order to give them greater circulation. Besides having retained all the advocates to deprive your brother of legal assistance, they engaged one celebrated for rage and impetuosity †;" but your devil of a brother uttered a terrible speech, because he found himself opposed to another furious

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his person. If the Archduke and Archduchess of Milan, would carry off the specimen now at Aix, they should have him cheap. But I do not think the Italians are so easily taken in with grand airs as the Germans." *Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated July* 18*th* 1783.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 13th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated April 28th 1783. The Marquis had already had occasion to complain of him ; for, in pleading for Madame de Cabris, who, in 1778, brought an action before the Parliament of Aix for the recovery of her freedom, and the guardianship of her insane husband and her daughter under age, Portalis, then very young, indulged in such fits of fury against the Marquis, that he was reprimanded.

fellow, who had been chosen on purpose, but whom he crushed all to pieces*. His adverse advocate, who was borne fainting out of the court, has not quitted his bed ever since the terrible dressing of five hours †, which your brother gave him. You may well suppose that the gentleman who always applies his vanity to the very inside-out of good sense and a good heart, is mighty proud of this feat ‡."

The Marquis gives still further particulars.

"Imagine the triumph of this mountebank. On the day of the great puppet-show, in spite of the guard, which was tripled, the doors, and barriers, and windows were all invaded and forced open by the wonder-stricken crowd. Some even got upon the roofs of the houses to see if they could not hear him. It is a great pity that they did not all hear him, for he spoke, and howled, and roared so much, that his lion's mane was white with foam and steeped in perspiration ||."

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* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, to Madame du Saillant, dated June 5th 1783.

† My poor brother writes to me that his nephew spoke and pleaded like a Cicero, from a quarter past eight till one o'clock, without spitting or blowing his nose. But I tell you that this posthumous Cicero is nothing more than an incorrigible chatterer and a fool."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Longo, dated June 9th* 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated June 22nd, 1783.

|| Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 15th 1783.

The Bailli also wrote on the subject.

" I had not courage enough to state to you the unfortunate issue of your brother's lawsuit. I know that the parties who lose always pretend that their case has been badly judged; and I should think myself one of this class of murmurers, had I not, in support of my opinion, not only that of all the town—for public clamour forced my adversaries to withdraw from the field, with shame and quite alone *—but also that of all the magistrates of any reputation, whilst those whose votes made us lose, stand very light in the public estimation, and some even worse, as it is said. Your father without intending it, did us a great deal of harm; and the woman you know of, persuaded him that, at a distance of two hundred leagues, and without knowing the individuals, he could see better what he had to do, than I who had been studying the man and thing for the last five years. This decree has disgusted the whole province; it will not be believed, but it is a fact †."

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* " It is now known that the decree would have been quite favourable, if public opinion had been consulted. It is known with what testimonies of kindness and benevolence, during the progress of this suit, the defeated party was honoured, which put the successful parties to flight. It is known with what transports the sentences favourable to my cause, rendered by the first judges, were received, and how my pleadings were listened to."—*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed*, &c.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th 1783.

This appears to us very high authority; but we must add that the

The Bailli, whilst he wrote in these terms to his niece, did not conceal his opinion from his brother.

" It was Paris that ruined us here; for a correspondence has always existed between a certain person whom you do not know well enough, but whom I well know, and this woman. You may not believe me, but it is certain that they have been well informed here of your repugnance to appear in the suit. They considered themselves sure that you would prevent us from going to law; hence all they have said, and their insults, and their gladiator boastings.

" You are the elder, and you cannot believe that your younger brother knows any thing: you fancy him pre-occupied and imposed upon; but it is not less certain that we have been ruined by this praiseworthy and useful letter-writing *."

Without admitting or even alluding to the cause mentioned by his brother, the Marquis this time did not refuse to yield to evidence.

" In fact the judges are greatly embarrassed. As

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most complete public notoriety had preceded it, and that the contrary was never asserted except by writers who wanted to calumniate Mirabeau. We are surprised to find in the ranks of such writers, M. Ch. Lacretelle, who having again degraded history by inserting in its pages insignificant and false anecdotes borrowed from obscure pamphlets, says that " Mirabeau sank under his evil reputation." *History of France during the eighteenth century.* Paris, 1821, vol. vii. p. 19.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 2nd 1783.

no *act of that alleged defamation* was taken on the instant, there is not, in what remains, sufficient ground of separation, and the less so because they admit that during the last six months his conduct has been good under their eyes. On the other hand, the judges could not summon courage to give Marignane and his band, such a slap in the face. The servants here say that all this will end in a few years' residence in a convent, before judgment is pronounced; that they will scratch each other at the first visit, enter into explanations during the second, and beget a child at the third. I might have patched up the matter, as I see that they do each other a mutual justice by calling each other rogue and whore. This is certainly making a progress *."

We find in the same letter from the Marquis some particulars concerning what occurred when the decree was pronounced in open court.

" Your brother has lost his cause, that is to say, the court have declared that matters shall remain *in statu quo;* that is to say, that the wife shall remain with her father, and the husband and wife shall be separated bodily and in property, until further orders. This last form is used, because it is said that man cannot sever the bonds which God has formed. But at bottom, the question turned upon the convent, since, in his plea, he

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 15th 1783.

declared that he would have none. The debate lasted four hours, between eight judges, the others taking no share in it, and refusing to vote. Among the four who were favourable to him*, some proposed two years' residence in a convent, the others, until she was thirty-five years of age. The first president proposed that they should decide provisionally, and refer the case to the first judge, the reference being registered; but the others refused every thing. He then told them that they should sit twenty-four hours in debate. At length the Marignane party succeeded in detaching one of the younger judges from the other side†. The first president refused to insert, as is usually done, that the opinions were unanimous, saying, that he wished his to be publicly known. The advocate-general was hissed. Your brother had gained the whole country to his side, the people, and the good judges. It is surprising how that hang-dog wins the regard of every body. I perceive this in other people's letters, for mine give no particulars on the subject‡."

Although well acquainted with every circumstance

* M. de la Tour, the first President, and Messrs. Dénoyer, de St. Jean, and du Peyrier.—*Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed, &c.*, p. 141.

† The President de Jouques, "who went over to Madame de Mirabeau's side, 'not to give,' as he then said, 'in so solemn a cause, the scandal of a division.'"—Ibid. p. 142.

‡ Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 15th 1783.

of the case, the Marquis would not hear of an application to annul the decree*.

"I informed you of your brother's case. It is asserted that his wife and father-in-law, driven away by the public outcry, are coming to Paris. At the same time the other wishes to come hither and get the decree annulled; but I will not allow it. Such a proceeding, which I would willingly have seen patched up in Provence, even after the publicity, is not worthy of me, and I shall not change my mind in this matter†."

The Bailli also confirms this.

"Your father opposes the appeal. He will not understand that the question is not about a wife, but about our honour, which is engaged in the business. I expect soon to send him back your brother, who will surely make him alter his determination. This brother of yours has become the idol of the whole country. He prudently puts up with some insolence, which your father's letters had encouraged certain individuals to commit. He also showed in the clearest, shortest, and most precise manner, when the proper time came, that it was dangerous to be insolent to him ‡."

* The Bailli had, however, written to him:—

"The most respected of the judges are the first to urge us to get the decree set aside."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th* 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 2nd 1783.

‡ Letter before quoted, from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated August 30th 1783.

Mirabeau, in fact, had contained himself much longer than could have been expected from his natural impetuosity and tried valour. Some time previously, the Bailli had written—

"I am well satisfied with your brother; his wife was right in saying that he had strength of mind on great occasions. People here are playing him all the ugly tricks that they can think of. He is made to suffer the strangest and most disgraceful conduct. He has, however, contained, and still contains himself; and he sets me the example: for I confess that, at his age, if the same offences had been committed towards me, I should most probably have ruined myself *."

The Bailli, even prior to this, had given an instance of his nephew's moderation.

"There is a man here † whose name you may guess. His father has commanded him not to interfere; but not only does he interfere, but is even the reputed mover of the whole business. Your son behaves here with great courtesy; and even the day before yesterday, he saved this man from a difficulty into which his impertinence had brought him. There is in this town

* Letter before quoted, from the Bailli to Madame du Saillant, dated June 23rd 1783.

† Galiffet, a provincial hero, who has 500,000 francs a year, and who declares himself. All this, from hence, appears to me the most insipid jumble in the world.—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated January 23rd* 1783.

a young English nobleman *, who is acquainted with, and very much attached to your son. This Englishman was walking on the *Cours* with three of the first ladies in the province. The captain passed, and looked at them with an air of contempt, and did not bow, although he is acquainted with these ladies, but is angry with them because they are on your son's side. The Englishman was about to charge him, when your son stopped him, saying, 'I am, for the present, the captain of that man's guard †.'"

On the very day the decree was rendered, Mirabeau sent a message to M. de Galiffet, whose well-known partiality in the business was attributed by the public to a particular cause affecting Mirabeau's honour as a husband.

"The same day there was an explosion with Galiffet, another puff-ball. But the Bailli is very proud of the business, and it is rather dangerous to contradict him. Be that as it may, I have seen all the particulars in letters received by other people, and Galiffet is terribly laughed at ‡."

He had been wounded.

"I wrote to you that there had been a duel between him and Galiffet. They appointed another meet-

* Lord Peterborough.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 6th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter, before quoted, from the same to the same, dated July 17th 1783.

ing at Vaucluse: he went, but the other was prevented *."

An officer in the Marechaussee, whom Mirabeau did not expect to see, persuaded him not to wait any longer. A second meeting was appointed, with no better success, at Lisle (five leagues from Avignon), and there Mirabeau remained a whole week without seeing his adversary †.

He did not, however, give up the point. After his return to Aix, he had for some days past been watching the motions of his adversary, who had willingly obeyed the public authorities in their prohibition of a second duel. One day, the servant, whom he had sent out for information, having assured himself of the direction which M. de Galiffet had taken, ran hastily to seek his master, whom he met carrying a great number of books in his pockets and under his arms. Mirabeau, without giving himself time to get rid of his load, contented himself with freeing his right arm, and drawing his sword, ran to meet M. de Galiffet. His own chasseur and the servant of his adversary drew back on each side to keep off any persons who might approach, placing themselves at each end of the street, which was short and narrow. The combat was warm,

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 2nd 1783.

† Mirabeau employed a portion of the time he was waiting for his opponent, in writing an effusion in poetical prose, upon the fountain of Vaucluse. We possess it in his own hand-writing.

but did not last long; the Count of Galiffet was run through the arm. Next day, both he and Mirabeau were placed under arrest, at their own houses, by the Grand Provost. Some time after, satisfactory explanations were given, and a reconciliation was brought about, through the kind offices of M. de la Tour, first president, and intendant of the province *.

* In relating this fact, we have no intention of granting the honour of a contradiction to old and contemptible reports, which, notwithstanding the proofs of Mirabeau's valour given in Corsica, accuse him of a want of personal courage. As we are writing his life, we merely wished to record a fact within our own knowledge. But here is another fact, which, a few days after Mirabeau's death, was published in the *Mercure Universel.*

Letter to the authors of the *Mercure Universel.*

April 11th 1791.

Nothing is to be neglected relative to the great man, of whom death has just deprived France; and I should consider myself a bad citizen, did I not, on this occasion, give a formal contradiction to those of Mirabeau's detractors, who wish to make him pass for a coward.

" Pending his lawsuit with his wife, being grossly insulted by three *ci-devant* nobles, he challenged them upon the spot, and, the same day, fought them all three. Although I was present at these three duels, I have no language to express the manner in which he bore himself towards one of them, the last of the three champions whom he had forced into the field. All that I can say is—and several well-known inhabitants of Aix, where these duels took place, will attest the same thing—that I never saw even any of our duellists by profession bear themselves towards adversaries with more firmness and gallantry. This fact, which I attest upon my honour, seems to me unanswerable, and it adds the more to M. de Mirabeau's glory, because, during the course of his troublesome labours, he evinced sufficient greatness of soul not to expose his life to the sword of a bully, but

The Bailli was completely discouraged by the loss of the cause.

"Nothing of mine ever succeeded," he wrote, "whatever zeal, perseverance, care, or devotedness I may have applied to it. I never thought of myself, only of my family. I bestowed the hand of one of my nieces * in marriage very happily, to all appearance, and you see what it has come to. I took the first steps with regard to my nephew's marriage, and behold the result! I have devoted myself to my family, which is the cause of my not commanding our naval forces. The sole fact of my seniority would have led me to the command: and I have been more at sea, and in more actions, and have received more wounds than Guichen, D'Orvilliers, and Grasse, who were only midshipmen when I was a lieutenant. As for the generalship of the galleys, it has done me as much harm as good.

* * * * * *

"At length, the admission is wrung from me that Melchisedec was very lucky; for, from my having striven for my family, much grief has come upon me.

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reserved his courage to encounter, until his latest breath, the enemies of public happiness.

(signed) "DESPRES DE WALMONT."

We presume this to be the signature of M. Desprès de Walmont, a man of letters, born in 1757, and who died in 1812, author of the "Epistle to the People" (1798), and of some comedies and novels, now nearly forgotten.

* Madame de Cabris.

I have been slandered; and I have taken a great deal of trouble, which has not met with approbation; for amid all the marks of affection with which you disguise your disapproval, I can easily detect it.

* * * * * *

"Thus, then, is the suit lost, and our house extinct *, thanks, not to you, whom I do not accuse, but to people who love you alone, of your family, and have persecuted all its other members. Cassation of the decree still remains; and to endeavour to effect it, you must recal your son, who has now nothing more to do here; neither have I, although this business has cost me six months of my time, besides my rest, and health, and about 20,000 francs in money. Let him now go to

* The reader may already have remarked that, although there were two sons, the elder alone was depended upon to perpetuate the name. It was assumed that the Viscount of Mirabeau, in consequence of premature obesity, and the expectation of soon obtaining a commandery of Malta, would never marry. It is, however, by his only son, issue of his marriage with the Countess of Robien, that the name has been propagated. Peuchet is ignorant of this circumstance, as he shows, vol. i. p. 9; and, indeed, his whole work evinces but little study or research, except among the works most in circulation, from which he has compiled his book, without thinking of having recourse to unpublished documents, or even to published documents, when copies of them were scarce.

Victor Claude Dymas, only son of the Viscount of Mirabeau, was a man of rare probity and benevolence. He died December 27th 1831, aged forty-two years, leaving four infant children, three sons and a daughter, to the care of his young, virtuous, and gifted widow, who will render them worthy of the great name which they alone are now entitled to bear.

you; it is your turn; I have done more than my share *."

But in vain did the Bailli urge his brother to get the decree set aside, assuring him that the judges themselves recommended an appeal: the Marquis peremptorily refused.

"You know at present the issue of your brother's lawsuit. He is nothing but a madman, in whose hands no cause could succeed. Now, instead of calming his effervescent humours, he is pushing my brother, who throws the ball at me, to bring the matter before the council of cassation. This is again the greatest of my vexations†. The Bailli being nothing but his nephew's speaking-trumpet, teases me every other day with urging the necessity of an appeal in cassation; he talks about the general opinion, the family honour, the disgrace of his old age, the importance of his nephew's coming hither to oppose intrigue to intrigue, and so forth. All this makes the days I receive letters, very disagreeable ones. Finally, I have made up my mind, and forbidden this appeal in cassation. I have stated, that I am ready to give the prohibition in writing, and that they may have it placarded if they like‡."

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* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 19th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated July 27th 1783.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated August 31st 1783.

Mirabeau, however, was not to be deterred by this prohibition.

" He is on his way hither, in addition, and comes, as he writes, *to meet my commands*. Take notice that I had written expressly, and in a letter to which they replied, 1st, that I would have no appeal in cassation; 2ndly, that if he came hither, my door should be closed against him. My brother writes me, that I must not be surprised if I see him arrive. He may live where he pleases, except at my house. I will see him whenever he wishes to speak to me, in order that he may not knock at every door for admittance; but I will grant nothing beyond this—giving him full liberty, but taking it also myself—leaving him his free will, more than of age for ten years past, but determined to hear nothing more of his affairs, either black or white*."

Such were the hostile intentions of the Marquis. A few days after, he refused even to see his son.

" As for this gentleman, he is I believe at Paris, for my brother wrote to me that he was to leave Aix on the 9th. If he appears at my door, he will find his name there in writing, with a note explaining my intentions, which are neither to see nor even to hear him, if I can avoid it; neither to injure nor to serve him, nor to interfere in any manner with what concerns him; to renounce giving him advice or orders; to

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 14th 1783.

give him, in short, full freedom, taking the same myself. This is not being too harsh after his formal violation of my commands, which forbade his coming hither, and informed him that if he came my door should be closed against him. I am prepared for all his evolutions, and we shall see what will happen*."

On the previous day, the stern father had made the same declaration to the government.

"I am far from desiring to trouble the King's ministers; the senseless beings who bear my name have too greatly misused their indulgence. But it is my duty to place in your hands an order which the King was graciously pleased to grant at the prayer of my children, whereby my son, on leaving the donjon of Vincennes, was at my orders with respect to his place of residence. * * *

"My son, against my will, has had a lawsuit with his wife. He has lost his cause, and in consequence has formed plans to which I have refused my approbation, as I did my consent to his coming to Paris, stating my reasons for such refusal. His means of action are not mine. But he has come to Paris to receive, as he states, my commands from a less distance. I do not complain to you of this disobedience; but I renounce henceforward, all intention of serving him in my own way, as well as all authority over him. He

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 20th 1783.

is more than thirty-four years of age, and is married. I have given him the share of my property which my means have permitted; I punished him when I thought he deserved it; I forgave him when I thought he would return to the order of his duties; and I have withdrawn him from the unfortunate difficulties in which he had involved himself. I had even put him in the way of again uniting himself to his wife; and in a situation to regain the esteem of the province in which he will, some day, have estates. I have placed him in connexion with all the sound members of his own family. My task is completed. It is for him henceforward to pursue the line of conduct he considers most beneficial to himself. I can serve him no more, nor guide him, nor be answerable for him. Under these circumstances, I return the order, and beg you will have the goodness to lay at the King's feet my very humble thanks for the favour he vouchsafed to grant me, of disposing of my son under his royal authority *."

Anxious to close our account of this lawsuit, we shall now relate only the principal circumstances which remain to be told, but without entering into details, and without comments, or quotations.

Mirabeau's arrival in Paris, and his known intention of appealing, greatly alarmed the Marignane family, who feared, and with very good reason, the effect of

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to M. Amelot, dated September 19th 1783.

such an appeal, and the publicity which would be given to the Cases for Counsel, and to the pleadings. All sorts of intrigue were employed to deter the obstinate appellant. The reader may see in Peuchet's work*, the denunciation, as false as it was disgraceful, written October 20th 1783, to M. Lenoir, by the Procureur-général Leblanc de Castillon, who had been hissed in the person of the advocate-general he had sent to represent him at Aix. About the 20th of February, Mirabeau circulated a Case, which had been printed at Lyons during a rapid and secret journey he made to Dauphiny, of which this impression was not the sole object. No sooner was the distribution of the Case begun, than it was interrupted by the board of directors for printed books at Paris, under pretence that an ordinance existed prohibiting the publication of petitions on appeal in cassation, until they had been answered.

Mirabeau appealed to the keeper of the seals, with whom he had, but without success, a very warm conversation, in which, if we are to credit his own statement, he spoke much less as a suppliant party to a lawsuit, than as a tribune, a writer upon public law, and even as a legislator†. He likewise failed in an

* Vol. ii. p. 252.

† The reader may convince himself of this by reading from page vii. to page xiii. of the Preface to "Case of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed," &c. 1784. Octavo.

application which he made to the King, in May 1784. He therefore went to Belgium, where he republished his Case, to which he added a narrative of what had passed between him and the keeper of the seals, not very flattering to the latter. He secretly introduced into Paris fifteen hundred copies of this production, and M. de Miromesnil, though personally attacked in it, did not take very strong measures to prevent its circulation. Mirabeau, on this occasion, committed an act of revenge as unnecessary as it was dangerous, and without deriving the least advantage from it: for his petition was rejected, and he increased the number of his enemies, as well as the reputation for turbulence and audacity which he had acquired by his former feats.

In closing this painful recital, we shall here state all that remains to be told concerning Madame de Mirabeau, whose name we shall never afterwards allude to in the remainder of our work.

After her separation, she continued to reside successively in the town of Aix, and at the neighbouring chateaux of Marignane, Tourves, Tholonet, and Bar, where her time was spent amid parties and fêtes, the bustle of which did not keep off ennui, as is proved by her letters already quoted, as well as by several others in our possession. After the striking ovation which followed Mirabeau's election at Aix, March 13th 1789, the

people went in a body to the hotel Marignane, and a numerous deputation waited upon the Countess in the name of the rest, to beg that she would return to her husband. That which this well-meant but tumultuous appeal could not effect, Madame du Saillant attempted towards the end of 1790. Letters were written by her and her brother, and the negociation was in all probability about to succeed, when Mirabeau's unexpected death put an end to it. His widow emigrated shortly after, with her father, and spent several painful years in exile and poverty. Having returned to France November 27th 1796, her first care was to write to Madame du Saillant. In the extracts given in a note, will be found the only facts worth mentioning *.

* After the lapse of time that has gone by, and the events which have passed since you heard of me, my dear sister, you will doubtless be surprised to hear that I am so near you †. Not that I have neglected any opportunity of bringing myself to your recollection, and of hearing of you; but I was not fortunate, and all my attempts were unsuccessful. I am totally ignorant of all that concerns you, and I can assure you, that it is one of the troubles I have felt the most among all my others, of which I ought not to complain, my fate having been that of so many others. With what part shall I begin telling you all I have to say to you, my dear sister, for I trust you will always be so, notwithstanding my change of circumstances. I feel that my heart is always the same towards you. Years and events teach me how to appreciate better the friendship and kindness which you lavished upon me during the happy days I spent with you. That interval of my youth always affects me whenever I think of it, and it is, in truth, one of the thoughts which occurs to me the oftenest. * * * *

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† This letter was dated from Lyons.

Madame de Mirabeau having, by her second marriage, become Madame de Rocca, obtained, in June 1797, the erasure of her name from the list of emigrants. But she was soon after overtaken by a fresh misfortune: M. de Rocca died, the 24th of Pluviose, year VI., from the neglected consequences of a fall from his carriage. His widow expresses the deepest grief at his loss, in letters now in our possession.

Shortly after this event, she went to Paris, and took up her abode with Madame du Saillant, at the Hotel Mirabeau, where she found the royal luxury of the sixteenth century preserved untouched in the chamber of Margaret of Valois, to whom the fair refugee compared herself, not, however, on account of her beauty and gallantries, but from the vicissitudes of a toilsome

" I am going now, my dear sister, to speak to you of myself. Had I sooner attended to decorum, I should have begun by informing you of my marriage. I have no longer the honour of bearing your name; but I am not less attached to you—not less your sister. I have married the Count of Rocca, a worthy and excellent man, who has acquired great military renown as an officer in the service of the King of Sardinia, and possesses the esteem of all honest men. He constitutes my father's happiness, and to him do we owe our existence for more than three years that we have been together. I have a son upon whose life I now begin to build hopes, though his is a weak age, as I have already learned to my cost *. My husband being a foreigner places me in a situation different from that of the other emigrants who return to France; and makes me hope that I may successfully claim my rights upon my father's property. This is the reason which has induced me to quit him for a short time †."

* This child died at Lyons soon after.

† Unpublished letter from Madame de Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 30th 1796.

life, and of domestic broils, arising from the dangerous isolation of a virtual divorce, and from her taste for, and practice of, the arts and belles-lettres. She soon returned to the old domestic habits which she had always regretted, and became more warmly attached than ever to Madame du Saillant, and her numerous and beautiful family. She also conceived a great affection for a child whom her host and hostess treated like one of their own, because Mirabeau had adopted, and bequeathed him to their kindness. Madame de Mirabeau—for she had resumed this name—even went so far as to bequeath by will to this child, all the disposable part of her fortune, forming a very considerable legacy, but which a defect of form rendered void. She lived in this manner three years, often melancholy, still oftener gay, according to the variations in her delicate health, and in her affairs, the settlement of which was attended with difficulties. However, her mind was always occupied with "her Mirabeau;" a return the more remarkable, from the circumstances of her being acquainted with the correspondence from Vincennes, which, at this period, had already been published several years, and in which Madame de Mirabeau is horribly calumniated. She never ceased surrounding herself with the letters of her first husband, with portraits of him, and with his favourite music, which she sang with still admirable voice and art. Being at length suddenly seized with an acute

disease, she expired, after a few hours of suffering, having scarcely completed her forty-eighth year, on the 5th of Ventose, Year VIII. (March 6th 1800), in the room and in the very bed formerly occupied by Mirabeau, whose memory inspired her each day with more passionate regret.

A strange fatality had severed their bonds. Madame de Mirabeau, like the other members of the family, had misunderstood her husband who, as he himself admits, "was of too high and too unequal an intellect for her." Intellectual but frivolous, sensible but unsteady, less artless than timid, thoughtless rather than sincere, impressible rather than feeling, caressing yet not affectionate, obstinate though without bitterness, vain though free from pride, not hating but prejudiced, more strict in morals than in appearances, better endowed with amiable qualities than with solid virtues, gentle, affable, kind, and benevolent:—such was Madame de Mirabeau. That which alone kept her from her husband was her weakness, which made her unable to resist her father's selfishness, the importunities of the collaterals, the pleasures of society, and the intoxication of flattery. At a later period of her life, the severe lessons of age and misfortune effaced her defects, and perfected the better qualities of her nature. It cannot be doubted that her return to her first husband would have secured for both a peaceful, honourable, and happy domestic existence; and it was, perhaps, only necessary for

Mirabeau's widow to advance in years, in order to reach the level of the name she had taken, and of which she became worthy as soon as it formed the sole object of her pride.

We now close the first division of our work, the two divisions of which, according to the plan we have traced, bear a character essentially different from each other. In fact, the period we have now reached, terminates, in our opinion, Mirabeau's private, and begins his political life. A few brief explanations will, we trust, suffice to justify our making this distinction concerning which, independently of our plan and our particular object, we shall not differ from those readers whose suffrages we are most ambitious to obtain.

From the very birth of Mirabeau to the period of his lawsuit at Aix, none but imperfect documents have hitherto served to let the public into the secret, well or ill understood, of the private life of this wonderful man.

Thus, in the justification written in March 1st 1778, to which we have so often alluded in the course of this work, and which certainly constitutes the very best ornament of the Vincennes correspondence, Mirabeau himself gives a full account, and draws a very highly coloured picture of the vicissitudes of his life, from his infancy to the first day of his confinement at Vincennes. After this, come the details contained in the letters published by Manuel. Next appear two

thick quarto volumes containing the judicial statements or cases, published during the two lawsuits—the one of revision at Pontarlier, the other for a separation at Aix. These volumes have mostly remained in the hands of a few booksellers; but their contents have been republished in various collections of celebrated causes *, also by Peuchet in 1804, and by Vitry in 1806, though with very different feelings: the former as the vindicative contemner, the latter as the blind admirer of a man whom neither understood. Both failed in their object; for the one saved Mirabeau's memory by endeavouring to tarnish it, the other degraded by his attempt to elevate it.

These different volumes of judicial Cases, and private letters furnish a very inaccurate, but at the same time a most circumstantial account of Mirabeau's private life, from its earliest years to a period comprising more than three quarters of his existence. These divers materials, being thus before the public, have formed the groundwork of every biography of Mirabeau which has preceded ours. As the individual whose life they were recording was so celebrated, those who have written about him were anxious to omit no fact supplied by these documents; and each, full of his own feelings, and guided by his particular notions, either did not or would not discover what was naturally to be suspected

* Among others in the collection edited by the late Maurice Méjan.

in these sources of information. The writers, desirous of praising Mirabeau, have either taken for granted all he said in his own favour, or allowed a condemnation to be passed upon his character and conduct, provided his genius and services were not denied. Others, on the other hand, have believed, collected, and published nothing but what was unfavourable to him. The pure truth cannot, therefore, exist in the works of either of these writers; and the species of fatality which, aided by Mirabeau's natural violence, and early misconduct, never ceased to influence his existence, seemed to ordain that he alone, or almost so, of the great number of master spirits who have adorned the world, should appear to posterity in all the nakedness of his private life, and be placed in such a light as to throw the beauties of his mind and character into the shade, whilst it made their deformities stand out in prominent relief.

We have stated elsewhere, that for the very reason that our predecessors, eagerly grasping at materials placed by publicity into their hands, without choice, have drawn a most minute, but totally false, picture of Mirabeau in private life; we considered it our duty to be also very minute in giving that exact truth which others had violated; and to follow these writers step by step, exposing their errors one by one. This no person can really do except ourselves. In a word, we undertook to notice every fact, give every argument for

and against it, and support our own conclusions on whichever side they might lean, with such evidence as impartial posterity always waits for until it is obtained, and then passes its final judgment.

But on this particular point, the natural limits of our work were defined. That we should discuss every thing that our predecessors had advanced, was both our right and our duty. The moment they were silent on any point, for want of documents, we conceived that we also ought to remain silent; for we are not disposed to admit that every part of the private life of a celebrated man, necessarily belongs to the public. The writer who respects both, ought not to tell every thing. He ought not to cast a shade over the immortal memory of a great name, and pamper the universal curiosity which that name excites, by relating certain particulars which, with reference to other men, are carefully buried in the secrecy of the family circle. Thus, in what relates to Mirabeau, his political career, so vast even in its brevity, is linked to a sufficient number of noble actions, and calls up a sufficient number of elevated thoughts, for it to be neither necessary nor proper to enervate its history by frivolous anecdotes, and domestic broils.

If, from this, our profession of faith, it were, however, inferred that we have studied to conceal every thing injurious to the memory of Mirabeau, and to disclose the facts alone which are honourable to him—in a

word, that we have written nothing but a panegyric, we beg to state, that such inference would be totally at variance with truth.

The explanations which we have given are as unquestionable as they are convincing. Far from seeking to present facts only in a light favourable to Mirabeau, we have exposed them in their true colours to whatever inference they might lead. We have neither invented nor exaggerated what was good ; we have merely stated the fact, and supported it with proof. Neither have we denied, or increased what was evil : we have either candidly admitted it, or peremptorily disproved it by evidence.

Finally, we have been measured but accurate, partial, but conscientious—chaste, but sincere. We boldly affirm that not a single fact has been omitted or disguised throughout the whole of our narrative ; and we challenge, in this respect, all possible contradiction.

We shall pursue the same course with regard to the volumes which are to follow. In writing Mirabeau's public life, we shall relate every public fact, already known or unknown, if we are convinced of its truth. But we shall confine ourselves to this ; for we are now writing for the chastened page of history.

What more have we to say ?

That Mirabeau, in the second part of his private life, was precisely what we described him in the first : obliging and affable, confiding and generous ; as kind

and easy tempered, as he was violent and impetuous; as ready to do good, as he was slow to believe and quick in forgetting evil; as warm in friendship, as he was incapable of hatred and revenge; as passionately fond of virtue, as he was the slave of his own passions.

We will further add, that Mirabeau, whom some writers have represented as a furious gamester, a low debauchee, and a voracious glutton, could not keep himself awake when engaged in play, hated all kinds of debauchery, breakfasted upon tea, and dined in ten minutes at the most sumptuous tables, where, it is true, he fascinated the guests for hours together, by an eloquence, which, his friends say, was even more brilliant in private conversation than in the tribune.

We must now look at the other side of the picture.

A great stigma, which is but too well founded, remains attached to Mirabeau's memory, on account of the looseness of his morals, and the disordered state of his private affairs.

1st. On account of the looseness of his morals.

His passion for women, amounting to a species of frenzy, led him to form connections without number. This was a deplorable propensity, no doubt, but more to be lamented than imputed to dishonourable feelings; for it was in a great measure involuntary, or, to speak more correctly, entirely physical. It was the result of a complaint, well known to the medical faculty, leading to uncontrollable physical passion. It had afflicted him

from his youth upwards, and appeared even some hours after his death—a strange fact, assuredly, but well authenticated.

2nd. An account of the disordered state of his private affairs.

Being always poor, and incapable of being provident, or imposing privation upon himself—being always excited by various wants, loving to excess the splendour of affluence, and trusting always to the future whilst he was careless of the present, he borrowed and spent much money, and scarcely ever paid his debts.

The particulars of the *private*, which we may be able to add to the *public* life, would give the reader no further information than he has already obtained: that is to say, for instance, that subsequently as well as prior to 1783, Mirabeau contracted many debts, and engaged in a great number of intrigues of gallantry. Whence, therefore, the necessity of adding to this general, but confused notoriety? Ought we to mention names? This would be a new scandal, inexcusable, because quite useless. Ought we to withhold names? Then we should be writing a mere ordinary romance. And for what class of readers would these unnecessary and improper details be given?—for posterity, before whom the obscure biographer may perchance appear in the train of the great man? Why, posterity would require to know nothing of Mirabeau but his public labours. For our contemporaries? If some of these

urge us to speak out, others urge us to silence. We entreat the latter, in whose chaste scruples we sincerely join, to understand and justify our silence. To the former we beg to observe, that Mirabeau has already supplied them with a sufficient number of "phsychological studies:" that writers enough, without including us, undertake to give them every variety of such studies; and that "if they require five-act dramas, let them go to the theatre *."

Henceforward, therefore, we shall entirely change the form of our narrative. Hitherto we have loaded our text with extracts from the family letters in our possession, whence we have derived the advantage of presenting Mirabeau's private life to our readers in a new form, characterising both persons and facts, besides furnishing evidence of all we have asserted. It has also enabled us to give variety to our work, as well as an unexpected character, extremely original and intellectual. In future, we must almost wholly abstain from applying to this source of information, in order that we may not fall into an abuse, which, we trust, we have hitherto avoided. It may be necessary here to add, that after the termination of the lawsuit at Aix, Mirabeau had but little communication with his father and uncle, who, from that period, scarcely interfered with his public life *.

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau,

† Among the documents published with Mirabeau's own sanction

But will it be said that we ought rather to have sacrificed every thing that related merely to his private life?—or shall we be reproached with having confined Mirabeau to a too narrow circle of vision?—with having given weak and thin touches to our picture, instead of the bold and broad pencilling necessary to paint a personage so imposing in history? We have elsewhere explained our intention, which, as we follow it up, has become more and more to us a labour of love. We have described the individual such as a deep study, which no one had before undertaken, or could possibly have undertaken, has made him appear to us. We have striven to restore to the great man that of which unjust prejudice had deprived him; and we have not feared, in showing him to be a better man, to make him appear less; for we are not of those who think that glory may suffice without goodness, and genius be independent of virtue.

We are bound to say, in conclusion, that our future sacrifices are wholly confined to the family correspondence. Exclusively of this omission, we shall continue

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relative to his life subsequently to 1783, no mention is made of his domestic differences, except in the "Letters to Chamfort," (Paris, year V.) pp. 45, 84 and 88. The brief allusions here refer to a judicial instance, relative to a pension which Mirabeau claimed as his only means of support, but could not obtain. The decision was in his favour; but being unable to reap the benefit of this decision without a personal process against his father, he took no further steps, but continued to live, precariously and in poverty, upon the produce of his pen.

our labours as we have begun them, avoiding, as much as possible, transcriptions from documents already published, and making great use of unpublished materials. And although the character of our work, in the succeeding volumes, will undergo a slight alteration, we trust that it will not weaken the reader's confidence in our truth and good faith.

APPENDIX TO VOL. III.

FRAGMENTS OF THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM THE MARQUIS OF MIRABEAU TO THE MARQUIS LONGO.

No. I.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE WRITER UPON HIMSELF.

WHEN the passage in your letter alluding to my pretended eloquence, was read to me, (it was in the evening) I exclaimed:— "Good God! I never persuaded any body in my life." I perceived that those about me smiled, which makes me think that they slander me behind my back. But I can safely make oath:—1st. That I never in my life knowingly maintained a paradox; my conscience would nauseate at such a thing, which is base and mortifying to the human mind, and resembles a walk in the courtyard of a madhouse. The moment I discover that a man is formed of argument for mere argument's sake, or he has been denounced to me as such, I can no longer listen to him: judge then if I would follow his example. I always love to take an interest in everything: at the theatre, in conversation, in looking or in listening, unless I take an interest, I am always thinking of something else; but I generally feel interested in everything. Though feeling is often a bad logician, it is never a wilful deceiver.

2ndly. I am as obstinate, as a woman in labour is strong. A single question awakens a multitude of ideas; the explosion is strong, the expression confined, and I am thought to be in a passion, when I am only in a pet. Like a schoolboy serving at mass, who

repeats only the last words of the responses, my reply is ready before my opponent has reached his fourth syllable, and I am forced to listen to particles, adverbs, and circumlocutions—and this is called listening! Perhaps, in your lively country, you have no unpackers of logic; here they abound. A lady once said to me:—"Your genius is to us what God was to Moses upon Mount Sinai: it never speaks to us but through a burning bush!" The same person observed, as she listened to the reading of my Economics: "A tumbler is given to you that you may help yourself to a glass of water. You pour the liquid from too great a height, or too rapidly, or too abundantly, so that you only splash the water about and none remains in the glass." Such things are said only to those who laugh as they recognise the just application to themselves. Now, Sir, you may judge whether or not this resembles persuasive eloquence!

Letter dated from Bignon, November 12*th* 1776.

No. II.

ON A PROJECT CONTEMPLATED BY THE WRITER OF PUBLISHING A GENERAL COLLECTION OF HIS WORKS.

You may compare me to the man who, when a hundred years old, begged that death would grant him time to complete a wing that he was adding to his house; but I assure you that if letter-writing, and business did not absorb the whole of my time, I should soon complete the business. I am further careful to take very laborious walking exercise every day, in order that my organs may not become rusty; and I cannot think consecutively when alone—therefore my walks are so much lost time. I bring forth and twist about many involuntary ideas. A couple of months ago, for instance, I caught myself, on a day of pain and annoyance, suddenly composing, without being aware of it, the following stanza to a vaudeville tune:—

En quoi consiste la sagesse?
  Dans les succès.
En quoi consiste la vieillesse?
  Dans les regrets.
Pauvre homme, tant que je vivrai,
  Sage ni vieux je ne serai.

You will now fancy me the very patriarch of *improvisatori*; but as you love to see me in my letters, here I am. I well know that time deceives us, especially in old age, which shortens it as it shortens the body. Time presents a hard surface to youth, a rough one to mature years, and a slippery one to old age; but, when the worst comes to the worst, we should especially avoid being uncomfortable. Now, either we do not exist, or we still wish and hope for something. My works, therefore, and the hope that they may do some good, will always, at least I hope so, hold out to me in life a sort of freshness of prospect.

I am well aware that you flatter me; still, notwithstanding my innumerable inaccuracies of style—which is half figure and metaphor —my taste for proverbs, quaint sayings, and forged words, at the bottom of all my rustic jargon you will find something of truth, and of that truth too which comes to us from God, and appertains to superiority. Nevertheless, I have never claimed, nor had any right to claim the title of Universal Interpreter, or to enter into competition with the trumpeter of the day of judgment. But let every one follow my example, and say his best to his fellow-creatures; and, at last, the whole world will be well-informed.

No. III.

Believe me, it is not necessary to go very far in search of something new from other men; for scarcely a man exists who cannot teach us something. Though I am well aware of this, I practise it badly, because if I were to do otherwise, I must not wholly live upon my own brains. Now, it is not presumption which prevents me from gleaning in the fields of others, but exuberance. At the same time that I am very wild and refractory, when called upon to pay the indirect tax which the self-love of others, or conventional merit or advantages, attempt to impose upon me, any individual who can reason, may pull out the spigot of my stores, and all runs out. Since I have become old, I the more readily excuse this in myself, being a sort of political Boerhaave whom people consult, and charity blames me for it. But if, with the facility which God has given me for appropriating the property of others, I had been

able to seek it out and contain myself within bounds, I should now be very rich.—*Letter dated from Bignon, November 25th* 1777.

No. IV.

I have greatly delighted in literature, to which I applied myself in the strength of my youth; that is to say, from the age of twenty-three to that of twenty-eight, under an excellent master. I have written poetry, as every lively and ardent spirit does at a particular age. But what is more, I was well acquainted with the art and delicacies of our true versification, dignified to a supreme degree, but of which the admirers of Voltaire have not the slightest notion:—I was acquainted with it, I say, far beyond what I could execute. Yet I practised much in this way. I wrote a poem upon war, the only profession I was allowed to pursue till I was twenty-seven years old. I have allowed nothing of this to be known, because, having a great respect for all prejudices even to their very roots, I submitted to the one termed *barbarous*, which rejects notable *beaux-esprits*. I felt that a man was bound to render an account of his advantages, that he who obtained a great deal from society ought to appear ready to give something back; and that a man's own reputation ought to be the consequence, not the object of his labours. I therefore risked publicity in politics, science, and the duties to society. This succeeded; I therefore left my poetry in the closet, and I think I have gained by so doing. I did not send you my poor couplets as an impromptu, but as a highly philosophical portrait of myself. Concerning Italian poetry, this is what I have to say. Having sent for M. Buonamici to learn Italian by reading it, for instruction books and I are not cousins, I asked him if it would take me long to learn the language. He replied that this depended upon circumstances.

"If you are clever," said he, "it will not take you long; but if you are stupid, it *will* take you long."

I was then twenty-five years old, and thought myself clever. He gave me Cardinal Bentivoglio's letters, which are delightful, being written in the most easy and natural style. Finding however your prose too long. I asked him for Tasso; he replied that I should not

be able to understand a word of it. Why I understood it instinctively from my very birth! When any thing stopped me, I stuck a bit of paper upon the margin and went on. I never opened a dictionary. In a short time both my notes and Buonamici disappeared. In this manner, I read Ariosto, Petrarch, Dante, and I know not what besides; and I did not become reconciled to prose until I fell in with Frate Timoteo in the Mandragora, which I believe is by Ariosto. Since that period, I have read your historians, &c.; but all this has been absorbed, with every other species of literature, in the ocean of my Economics, which alone could keep me afloat, amid business and care. You would be pleased with the collection of Italian books in my library, and I have the highest respect for the literary genius of your nation, although in works of intellect, as in every thing else, it is the bundle of sticks untied.

(*Letter dated from Bignon, November 25th* 1777.)

No. V.

DIFFERENT CONSIDERATIONS UPON RELIGION.

Although we differ in opinion, I do not see what should prevent us from alluding to this great matter, and treating it between us in a political sense only. We are both solitary, it is true; but the sibyl judged much better in solitude than she would have done in the public squares. Let us therefore be like the casuists, who are allowed to say any thing to throw light upon a question.

Whether there be internal conformity or not, a thing belonging to our thoughts, and over which no one has any control, I know that you are a virtuous man, and will some day regret such consequences as I shall make evident to you. I am no devotee; neither is it in such a school that a man learns usefully to defend religion; and if I had the happiness to be so thoroughly master of myself as to be a really exemplary character, I would give the credit of it to a probity accessible to the emulation of those around me, of an age to be alarmed at rigourism. I should be very unwilling that my virtue were attributed to supernatural assistance, to ecstatic motives in which not the slightest weakness, imperfection, or absence of mind is tolerated, and which are thought to signify entire perfection.

Such is my profession of faith, but I do not think myself less invested with the strength to tell and convince you that one of the great faults in deed, if not in will, which a man can commit, is to do or say the least thing that may tend to weaken around him the opinion of a religion entirely holy, which announces an only God, the Author of all good, prodigal of charity, and the centre of all light—a God who will be only loved and obeyed, and who, in his commandments to man, has impressed nothing upon him but the love of his neighbour, and social good order; whose will is that the human species shall form but one body, of which he is the Father, and each individual a member, receiving, equally with his brethren, a share of the love and Almighty power of the Universal Father. This religion, uniting all its members in one spirit, is simple in its sacrifices, submissive and affectionate in its dogmas, charitable and constant in its discipline. It summons all mankind round the same table, to the communion of bread; it sanctifies and consecrates every act of human life; it embraces and renders, in some degree, divine, all the bonds of society.

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You will perhaps think that I am out of my senses: 1st, in speaking Latin before Franciscan friars; 2ndly, in sending you this prosopopœia; 3rdly, in entering upon a subject on which I am sure to have all the talk to myself, unless I would do as he did, who drew his sword to fight his own shadow. But I assure you, that when this chapter accidentally falls under my pen, I give no quarter to my opponent. You would not become this opponent, I am sure; yet it is impossible that, at your age, you can have weighed, as I have done, all the political consequences of levity upon this matter, which I consider the most important of those to be set upright, and supported by instruction—my great and only remedy for every thing.

(*Letter dated from Bignon, November* 12*th* 1776.)

No. VI.

Be assured that all social bodies and societies whatever, that are not fairs, caravans, or markets, believe in the immortality of the soul, and in a state of future reward and punishment. Man is led to it

of himself, as a consequence of his ambition never to lose but always to acquire, and by that sensibility which abhors the idea of the destruction of its own idols—of what it loved and ought to love and respect. I am only speaking politically. Upon this foundation all religious rites are so many valuable and indispensable bonds which connect men together. But fraud, and fanaticism—where is the remedy? Where?—why in religion itself. The people will invent superstitions for themselves without your aid, wherever debauchery and infidelity, with their horrid din, do not annihilate fear and hope. If the hail threatened the gauzes and waxen dolls of the palace, as it threatens the harvest, you would soon see these laughing puppets run at the sound of the church bells like the men of the farm. Fear and hope will create superstitions, and superstitions will create rogues. Hope makes angels white, fear makes them black; and as there exists more hope than fear, superstitions will be black, gods cruel, and modes of worship sanguinary, or disgraceful and licentious, which is just as bad. Man, I tell you, must have something to look to beyond life: the good must have a place of refuge, the evil-disposed or the frolicsome, a chastiser. The man therefore who is born in a community, and owes every thing to a community, is born in a religion, and owes every thing to a religion. Let him first respect it as his mother: if it raves, let him venerate it; if it displays vice, let him cast his cloak over it. If he feels the strength and vocation of a reformer, there is only one course for him to pursue: 1st to instruct, 2ndly to instruct, 3rdly to instruct, and always instruct. The knowledge of *rights* and *duties*, founded upon *possession*, and constituting *property*, is the foundation of natural religion, as the latter is that of every other. Fortunately nothing requires reform with us, except abuses purely human. Such abuses will exist always and everywhere; but this must not deter us from striving against them, but only in the manner I have described—by giving instruction. And in this, as in every thing else, a state reformer is nothing but a dangerous madman, if he supposes he can do every thing. The wise man well knows that he cannot and ought not to fill any more than his own leaf in the great book of life, and that he must fill it with truth, if he possibly can. However, as I used to tell my venerable mother, who, though a *strong-minded* woman, was always pious—but of an elevated piety, always considering the nearest confessor the

best,—believers and unbelievers may shake hands: the former may cry out, "O God, increase my faith!" and the latter exclaim, "Those rascally Jews seem to remain on purpose to create a prejudice." He who thinks he is laughing at the orvietan, laughs only at the mountebank selling it. On both sides, I mistrust the security of those who seek to levy troops; but I am of opinion, that to lead a good life is the best mode of soon agreeing in heart and mind with the simple-minded; and I have experienced that this renders us internally incompatible with destructive reasoners.

(*Letter dated from Paris, January* 19*th* 1777.)

No. VII.

Fear nothing on the subject of bigotry. At no period have the popular devoutness of the Italians, and their predilection for calling upon God for assistance, passed for proofs of their piety. The morals of a people are the real pledges of their religious feeling, as they are the means of its preparation. Let us have morals, and religion will come of itself. But how is it possible that for the last thousand years Italy could have any morals? We must go back to the time of Theodoric, to find in that country even a transient flash of government directed towards its natural object. All the rest is nothing but a tissue of hostile precautions, views of dismemberment and of tyranny, defensive measures, and preparations for war. No sovereign is truly legitimate except him who is called to the throne by the will of the people, or who succeeds to the power which his father had obtained before him. All sovereigns, not really legitimate, run the risk of being forced to adopt tyrannical precautions. Now, of these precautions, the most certain are those of corruption, for *par parem quærit*. Every corrupt man is essentially a tyrant, being a usurper by deed or will, of the right of another. He is therefore attached by analogy, convenience, hope, &c.; and if the worst should come to the worst, he is less formidable to the usurper than any other individual. I think, then, among your idlers and men of the world in Italy, you have many base men, many atheists or infidels, and many both active and narrow-minded beings, calculated only for intrigue. I perceive much talent among them, but without connexion, and

of a kind incapable of acquiring great and profound merit and true glory. I thought they possessed, and I think so still, more than any other nation, an aptitude for imbibing the truths of religion, together with the knowledge of rights and duties, and consenting to the duties of this knowledge; but I also think them more disposed than any other nation, to say with the utmost sincerity, *video meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*, and to ridicule the credulity of those pretended enthusiasts who believe that the Niquean reign could be realised.

When I say that religion is the first social bond, I do not mean the first in date, but the principal. Every reflecting Economist must admit this. Our principles embrace all nations—the whole human species generally. In the supposition that indolence, habit, and the impulse of the moment, or, at best, the loquacious philosophism of the GREAT PERHAPS suffice for the cit whose feet are warm and his bread baked, it is certain that all dwellers under heaven —oneself, one's property, and one's expectations, are too tightly wound up between fear and hope, between every good and every evil, too much exposed to overwhelming causes, for us not to care about a hereafter. See the mariner at sea, about to expose himself to great danger. At the sight of some unexpected object of magnitude, the soul goes beyond its sphere: here comes the attraction of the shortest forms of prayer for assistance, and of the commonest recipes. The sign of the cross is the best invented of all forms of prayers, and the easiest of all preservatives. Astrology, divination, magic—all human errors, in short, are proof to us that man will be religious in spite of us; but he will be so in his own way—at the instigation of his fear, which is the evil principle, the candle to the devil, the demon priest. I have already stated this. A bad form of worship makes bad worshippers, and the bad are not sociable. Believe me, my excellent friend, I would not attempt to make men more alike in opinions than in features; but there are certain general features which must be the same in all. All have two eyes and two ears; and if one half of the human race fancied they looked well with a scar, or took into their heads to paint their bodies red, whilst the other half painted them black, there would immediately be two parties. I admit the same thing to exist morally: filial respect, that for old age, that for masters, chastity,

good faith, the common utility, and many other duties—these are the true social bonds; but all this must have root in a special and direct commandment from God, not only because this is—for nature says it is—but because it must be. If the God of our soul, of our appetites, or of our dread, does not say this, he will say something else; for say he must, or else not exist. And thus, as I require man in all his possible entireness, I must elevate his mind; and the great motives which effect this are all external, and the further they are off, the further they extend his mind. I defy you to do away with the religion of an oath. * * * * Yet to whom is this religion addressed? To the living God of man, in man, and before man, and from whom man turns with difficulty. * * * *

It is, therefore, in awakening his good faith, deifying his duties, and supporting their unity by all the rules of brotherly love, that religion constitutes the principal and real bond of human communities. With regard to rites and conformity, let us be equitable and enlightened, and they will then cost us little, and vex us still less.

(*Letter dated Paris, March 31st 1778.*)

No. VIII.

On such a subject, your devils of theologians would prove much better apostles than Voltaire or D'Alembert. In this country they are more rational, and you can tell them good home truths. It once happened to me, in the presence of my very pious mother (who was God upon earth to me), to say to an Archbishop of Aix, seated by her fireside, and holding forth with great bitterness concerning the religious affairs of the day:—

"My Lord, I respect your sacred office, and the celestial unction transmitted from the Apostles to yourself; but I renounce, at this moment, and for my last hour, the God whom you are preaching and whose sayings you utter. The God I worship is always mild and gracious towards sin not committed in pride of heart. Even on the cross he said — 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' His tenderness and care were directed to the stray sheep; he wished us to have peace, and he recommended peace to us. 'Suffer little children to come unto me,' he said; and among the little children, he included the thoughtless, the mistaken, the positive,

and those afflicted with every kind of littleness of spirit. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?' This was his manner of receiving contradiction, for none is certainly stronger than blows *."

Such, my dear Marquis, is the image of the God I adore, and would serve, and not the punctilious and cruel God of excommunications and anathemas. This goodness of my deity would have caused me to be pointed at in your country. In this, hypocritical bigots are confined to a few circles of enthusiastic or intriguing women. Be this as it may, I am not uneasy about the manner in which you got on in the business with your doctor: I shall lose nothing by it, and nothing now remains for me to do, but to thank you for having placed me in a situation to make printing in your country obtain a small notch of rational liberty.

(*Letter dated Paris, May 22nd* 1779.)

No. IX.

The practice of which rite, that of rational tolerance, or that of gloomy intolerance, would render society most honest, most decent, and best regulated? It is important to keep men together, and not let them go astray. You oppose to my arguments, the enthusiasts, the rigourists, and the puritans, as if we were alluding to the last century, instead of the present, in which such people have but little influence, but in which everything is in process of dissolution.

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* Here is the same idea expressed, nine years after, in other words.

"'I say to the intolerant priests: He who gave you his mission, gave only one of peace to his Apostles; he commanded them to maintain peace and charity, and brotherly love. He announced that a war would be waged against them by all the vices leagued together and unchained, but commanded them to show patience, and termed happy only the mild and pacific. All haughty opposition, and all altercation, become passion, and every passion is irreligious. Here it is that the impiety begins which makes a man deify the Baal of his heart or of his understanding, and reject the God of peace.'

"Such, my friend, is my profession of faith. He who calls me an atheist or a materialist, is a pagan; and if I stand alone, I will remain a Christian to the last."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis Longo, dated January* 10*th* 1788.

I tell you, politically, that at Thebes for the Egyptians, at Delphi for the Greeks, at the Capitol for the Romans—at Jerusalem, Byzantium, Cusco, Rheims, and everywhere else, the true political combinations which have had any power, have all derived their origin from a temple, or a mode of worship, or an expiation, &c, &c.; that Rome and its mode of worship have formed and preserved the West; that, as a King once said, addressing himself to me: "You are mistaken; a King clad as I am, who goes to the army and to balls, can be head of the church by name only, and will never obtain the popular sanction. I prefer having the head of the Church at Rome, because I can come to arrangements with, and make use of him." I tell you that if I were a monarch and had great dominions separated and dismembered, I should well like that the same dalmatic * formed the lining of the same pragmatic. I would well clip the wings of the ecclesiastics, like those of all the other poultry in the yard, lest they should fly too high; but I would do it with the greatest precaution, in order not to expose them to the derision of those mud-dabbling and screaming birds which I wish them to lead in a body, and whose ducklings, and goslings, and poults, I should direct them to rear. I tell you, lastly, that you are all out of your senses. I have found the human generation full of prejudices and feelings; I have seen them doff their hats as they pass a wooden cross, and yet refuse to go to mass to hear it in company with a tax-gatherer; and I shall leave them possessed of neither prejudices nor feelings, but defying heaven, kissing the earth, and holding out their hands!

You say that we have received our religion from Italy: true, and we have received many other things upon which we have improved; I need only mention a certain loathsome disease, and taxation. Have not these greatly prospered in our hands?

(*Letter dated Bignon, March 14th 1782.*)

No. X.

Concerning God's glory, it can be only as applicable to scoundrels that it is presented in any other sense than the one I had in view,

* A robe worn by Catholic deacons and sub-deacons.

when I said that its boundary was the law. As I decidedly deny to atheists their very existence, you may well suppose that I suppress God's glory for those who convert it into a Medusa's head, or the mirror of the Danish Knight. As matter, I am but a grain of sand, which, by its moving, thinks it aids the globe in its rotation. But if I interrogate my thinking faculty and my soul, I feel that God's glory is within me; it informs this thinking faculty that God has willed great Order, and that the portion of it I am allowed to know, is called Natural Order, to the laws of which I must conform in my actions, on pain of delirium and wickedness; that intelligence and free-will were given to me for no other purpose than to extend my sphere in this present mould, and not set up a fantastic and personal idol. It tells my heart, that what kindles emotion within it, touches, expands, dilates, and elevates it, belongs to its high origin, which is a breath of unction and beneficence, a ray of light, God's glory; that, on the other hand, all that closes, contracts, compresses it within itself, or attaches it to miserable illusions of habit and opinion, belongs to man, misled by the abuse of his intelligence, detached from the instinct of the brute only to degenerate. With this exception, in the firm persuasion that nothing is either great or small before the Infinitely Great, far from considering our sphere a narrow one, I look upon each individual as a universe, or, at least, as a great state. But it is not less true, that in the greatest states, the proverb says, "When every one follows his calling, the flocks are well guarded." Now, it is the means whereby each may pursue his calling that I have studied, and endeavoured to submit to the intelligence of my fellow-creatures. In refusing to listen or act in consequence, they only imitate me, who, with all my fine morality, am not a bit more serene, beneficent, or tranquil, especially *cum pituita molesta est.* But I am very positive about the particular significations attempted to be attached to God's glory, although I think it quite right that this high name should be made a subject of awe, by attributing to it all that belongs to order.

(*Letter dated Paris, June 28th* 1785.)

No. XI.

I must tell you, that yourself and M. Spanocchi are too much for me, especially both together. At all events, my friend, I have no intention of disputing, or even discussing; but I must reflect on the two points upon which you consider us in controversy. With reference to the first, I formerly attempted to talk sentiment on the subject, not for the purpose of leading you away, but because it is a language I often use, and in man's natural state, the strongest means, I think, of persuasion in such matters. Though agreeing in the sentiment, you have, as you had a right to do, resisted its influence, because you would have to do with reason alone. To the latter I shall therefore confine myself, as I never reason but in politics.

Now, I say, do you think that democracy can administer and keep together a single family, and would you wish yours to be given up to it? If respect for old age and paternal authority are any thing, and have the right of successive usefulness to take the lead in the council, what is the cause of this? If the decadency which is in the law of nature pronounces their rejection, what will maintain the respect for authority? If force, or usefulness, who shall adjudge their respective claims, since between two contendents, one or the other must be discontented? What will maintain the credit due to an oath, the dread of perjury, good faith in private engagements? Honest people that you are, enlightened by circumstances and natural endowments, you judge of others by yourselves, and you will not perceive that, generally speaking, man must be chained up, although it is especially important that the principal link of his chain should raise, instead of crushing him—assist, instead of galling him. On this point, facts speak for themselves. Search in the history of all ages, and all places, for a hypocrite (*monstrum horrendum!*) who has not been successful. Look for a Salmoneus who could get himself accompanied by any but furies and satellites! There are two states of man: the *state of passion*, fruitful in prodigies, but always disjointed and ruinous; and the *state of reflection*, subordinate in appearance, but ultimately victorious. Now, of these two states of man, when has he been able to render propitious that

which alone insures success? Religion is necessary to politics, because the latter must be religious. Public worship is indispensable to them, because man, who is scarcely any thing more than an imitator, requires rites of some sort. All that in sound policy it is important to prevent, is the abuse of pretended communications from the Deity to the priest; and for this purpose a written law is, no doubt, requisite, and this law must be visible. The Holy of Holies and its secrecy, was one of the imperfections of the first written law; and he who goes far from the sanctuary, extends, for himself and his adherents, the influence and dominions of this false tabernacle, which is always imposing to the multitude. St. Louis refused to the bishops the support of the temporal authority for their anathemas; he tore and trampled under foot the pope's bull whereby the pontiff, as Christ's vicar, constituted himself the arbiter of thrones. What other sovereign in those times would have ventured to do one half of this? Being requested to witness the miracle of a child appearing in the Host, "If I saw it," he replied, "my faith could not be stronger than it is;" he therefore refused. This saying has remained, and the people were edified by it, because it was truly pious. The mask of hypocrisy will never yield to those who attack it in front, for its strings are behind. A blinded people will always mistake it for a face. But you must follow up hypocrisy close, until losing breath under its disguise, it flies to a place of concealment, and of itself makes room for the torch of the truly pious and always accessible brotherhood.

You have nothing to do with my metaphors, only with my argument. I tell you then that a wise man, and still more, a statesman, never allows his scruples to peep forth—quite the contrary: he makes, on every occasion, his profession of faith and of wisdom, the whole for the benefit of his own little person. Fortunately, the days are gone by when it was necessary to kiss the feet of the poor as an act of humanity. I say that, at all events, he ought to mistrust his own infidelity, just as I would advise the parson to mistrust his faith, according to the precept of the good Abbé St. Pierre, who recommended that a man should say—"This suits me for the present." In fact, the following words, which have been considered a good epigram, by being introduced into the exhortation of a monk to a dying man—"Offer your incredulity to God"—

appears to me the most judicious advice possible. There have been so many disputes about grace, and yet the field has remained open for any new disputant who wishes to rupture his uvula. Is it not the same thing concerning disputes about faith? But it belongs not to a wise man to deprive man, infinite in his fears and his hopes, of the idea and sense of a being infinite in justice and goodness, and of the hope of his own future existence in the presence and under the everlasting law of these two attributes. A politician, who has studied the human race, ought to know that all charity, which contains truth, security, probity, and other interpreters of the social connexion, is derived from hope, which latter is derived from faith, and faith from credulity; that this latter must be delicately handled, seeing that it is inseparable from man, metaphysician though he be, as without it he would be beyond the reach of discipline; that the way to prevent him from falling into any excess of this kind, is to enlighten him concerning his real interests, and not to point out his fears as vague, his hopes as vain—all which leads to nothing, and gives him confidence in nothing, and we require from him both docility and courage.

(*Letter dated November* 12*th* 1786.)

No. XII.

You are a very bad adviser, my good friend, in the poor opinion of your humble servant. Your noble expedient of exciting relaxation in the priesthood, and thereby annihilating the whole order, was that of Choiseul, and of all rash men, present and past, born and to be born. It is the remedy of emollients, which ultimately turns to putrefaction the whole mass of the blood. Recollect that the prudent Machiavel himself says, that when religion weakens in a state, that state is very near its fall. What a wise sovereign should observe against the worst of abuses, that of power over consciences, is to promote the study of letters, and require that priests should be men of learning and information, not in their own craft only, but in general literature and knowledge; also to profess a great respect for religion, and thereby rule the priests in their own sanctuary; also to require that the priests should instruct, instead of judging; also

to force the austere portion of them to be simply cenobites, prohibiting their exercise of any social power; lastly, also, when these infallible means, by being followed up, have given the sovereign his natural authority—inseparable from the motive pursued but not announced—to derive, from the canonical books and ecclesiastic decisions, the law reforming those accumulated and inveterate abuses by which the priesthood have become usufructuary possessors of the property of which they were originally only the responsible stewards; to reduce each institute to its original institution, and to lay down, in the very instruction given by the priests, the barriers that must thenceforward confine them within their proper limits, and render them the instruments of the public authority, which would despoil itself and split its own bark into fragments, if, with more or less of time and precaution, it did not deprive idleness of those resources of which that same idleness robs labour. I use this last word to exclude every species of mendicity, which, be it imperative, or exhortative, or suppliant, has always appeared to me man's degradation, both active and passive, and an enemy to work, the common patrimony of us all. You see, my friend, that I stick to my fancies. Every body has its principle of *virus*, to use your own expression: but the disease is only in the covering, and the desiccation consequent upon age, destroys the virus, instead of rendering it incurable. But we will make haste and reform even the globe itself, like Alphonso the Chaste, who lost his crown whilst he was waiting until he had settled the state of the heavens.

Adieu, my dear friend, you and I are a brace of madmen, but less so than many who think themselves very wise.

(*Letter dated Paris, July* 16*th* 1787.)

No. XIII.

You have seen from afar the punishment of La Barre*. Under

* The Chevalier la Barre, beheaded July 1st 1765, for having, says the sentence, mutilated a wooden cross placed upon the bridge of Abbeville. Everybody must have read the eloquent remonstrances made by Voltaire against this ferocious sentence, the execution of which the selfish and immoral Louis XV did not oppose by the exercise of his royal prerogative of pardon.

a good government, the offence would never have occurred, still less the denunciation; or if it was denounced, an order would have been fulminated by the cabinet, terming the proceedings an act of madness; and also, six months afterwards, a letter to the denunciator*, requesting him to send in his resignation. Take heed that I now speak as a politician, and not as a theologian. As a true politician, I should have doted upon St. Peter and St. Paul, but should have recommended them to pity, in their instructions, the carnal idolatry of simple-minded men, and show respect to those who, under emblems too near to human nature, adored heaven nevertheless, as beneficent and punishing evil faith; but the kicks bestowed upon the statue of Jupiter should never have taken place, I give you my honour, and still less the honours of martyrdom, &c. My principle is nothing more than that human nature requires in religion, as in every thing else, the mode of the prudent man, not that of the madman. The former leads to concord, the latter to discord, and concord is the sole business of government. It is because speculative hypothetical science cannot be cleared up by argument, that faith, or a particular gesture, is required. Peace.—Read the beginning of the chapter on Industry in the "Rural Philosophy," seize the spirit and not the letter, and then blush at having so long worried your elder.

(*Letter dated Bignon, November 3rd* 1778.)

No. XIV.

REFLECTIONS UPON DIFFERENT QUESTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS.

Were I not disabused about the Court of the King of Wishes, I should like to be or have been at the Court where you spent six weeks with Count Melzi †. We would nicely have reviewed this singular world. Perhaps the result of our ratiocinations would have

* Duval de Saucourt, counsellor in the Presidial at Abbeville, and accuser of the Chevalier la Barre.

† Francis Melzi, of Eril, Vice President of the Italian republic, in 1802, Chevalier and Keeper of the Seals of the kingdom of Italy, and Duke of Lodi in 1807. He was born in 1753, and died in 1816.

been, that the Friend of Men is that one among them who is the farthest from what he thinks he is. Perhaps we should have been wrong, for, in the end, all roads lead to Rome.

But Rome, in my system, is INSTRUCTION, and war does not reach it on either side. I do not allude here to civil discord, for I am of opinion that, on the contrary, this opens the road to instruction. But it seems that in the present state of almost general commotion in which we find political philosophism, the sovereigns who fear that the prevalent disease will reach their dominions, seek for foreign war, or wage it with each other, in order to get into their saddles and breathe the air congenial to them. I am not curious in newspapers, and scarcely ever read any; but having become a searcher after news, I cast my eyes, the other day, upon the *Mercure*, and there I saw that the King of Sweden attributes the insurrections * to a rescript which, being addressed to him, addresses also his nation!—or at all events the latter is named in it. I was very much tempted to send him back his sheaf †, telling him at the same time that the Emperor of China, who is as good as he is, not only allows his people to be spoken to, but speaks to them continually himself, giving them an account both of his sovereign acts and deeds, and of his private domestic affairs.

(*Letter dated Argenteuil, August 5th* 1788.)

No. XV.

You have long known, and so have I, that I am but a dreamer; but I knew not that I was a Tartar reformer, and yet I have just discovered my own politics in Tartary.

In reading the Institutes of Tamerlane ‡, which appear very insignificant to inattentive eyes, I saw, 1st, That he was the best friend possible of honest people; 2ndly, That, in his army, every ten

* The troubles which ended in the suppression of the Senate.

† The reader is aware that the Marquis of Mirabeau received from Gustavus III. the grand cross of the order of Wasa, the principal emblem of which was a sheaf of wheat.

‡ The Marquis probably alludes to a work entitled "Political and Military Institutes of Tamerlane," arranged and translated, with notes, by the learned Langles. Paris, 1787, 8vo.

soldiers elected a commander of ten, that ten of the latter elected a centurion, and ten centurions elected a captain of a thousand men; lastly, Ten of these captains elected a general. The greatest of blessings for men devoted to obedience, is to give them the choice of their commander. 3rdly, That the hero paid the greatest respect to the chiefs and most celebrated enthusiasts of his religion, asking their counsel, giving them accounts and so forth, whereby he maintained them always in his interest, in order that they should feed and exalt the confidence of his soldiers and his own. 4thly, The great care with which the peaceable portion of his subjects were governed: that is to say, protected and assisted on urgent occasions, leaving them their prejudices, dignities and privileges. 5thly, That he was good to excess towards his family, being the best possible father and kinsman; always in council, always surpassing every other by the confidence he inspired. Doctors of the law, military and civil chiefs, kinsmen and friends, all assisted at his councils, and all were consulted, or, to speak more correctly, admitted to think what the powerful genius of the hero had conceived, and was going to utter. Dear friend, prognosticate concerning the success of the great military expeditions of your own times, by the degree of approximation which the leaders of these same will offer you, compared with the conduct of Tamerlane.

(*Letter dated Argenteuil, August 5th* 1788.)

No. XVI.

As for our apparent difference of opinion upon the subject of the nobility, believe me, my dear friend, that it arises solely from the different optical points whence we severally examine the order. Nothing is more illiterate, silly, stupid, in the midst of a most ingenious people, more insolent and ridiculous generally, than the rich and idle nobles of Italy. They never had any real sovereign, never any employment. Our court and city nobles in France, are also contemptible. In the military and naval forces, they pride themselves upon their honour, which is something for the greater number, amid barbarity (for in this light must Europe be considered). The country nobles are very useful to the people, who in the rural provinces have infinite attachment to them; an advantage which the

lousy vanity of the age makes them exchange for a residence in cities. Before you raise a doubt whether nobility is good, you should first ascertain whether you could prevent its existence. I laugh when I find every author stating that there is no nobility in China, where all is dynasty, ancestors, and even feudality. Oh! how well we should agree, my friend, if we could but converse together a little. You will admit with me that the feudal system, which could never be a port for the human species, was, is, and will be a creek, a bay, a cove, an open roadstead, very salutary against the storms of anarchy; and that no government can exist fifty years without falling into the evils of anarchy, unless it be a government of instruction, which is the only real and good *despotism*. With regard to entails, the way to diminish them, as well as the overgrown estates, is by social prosperity. When and where the toise of land is worth a hundred pistoles, palaces are soon converted, and profitably too, into shops and smaller houses.

(*Letter dated Bignon, November 3rd* 1776.)

No. XVII.

Martha, Martha, sollicita, &c. should I say to the wisest prince in Europe, the Archduke Leopold *. Sovereigns are not charged to look after the minor rights of their subjects, they are only bound to wait for the claims of the latter. They are not charged to look after the advantages of their people in detail, but to trust this to the industry of their subjects All that the Eternal commands his substitutes here below, and places immediately under their charge, is *duration*;—it is to ordain the social world as He ordained the physical world. Every thing, it seems, unforms and renews itself in detail; every thing reproduces and perpetuates itself in the general mass. *Hæ tibi erunt artes.*

Place your own state, for instance, and by your example Europe and the whole world, in a situation no longer to fear the revolutions of your transient existence, or the faults of your children. All that

* Grand Duke of Tuscany, afterwards Emperor of Austria, on the death of his brother Joseph II.

appears to cause the action and reaction, the simultaneousness and the vigour of the political societies of our own times, is precisely that which constitutes their evil, and prepares their destruction They are like a sick man, who is never so much talked of in his family and his neighbourhood, and who never occupies the attention of so many people, as the day before his death; and in proportion as they appear more active, they approach nearer to the hour of their downfall.

Thus, after the pretended fine ages of nations which have figured upon the great stage of the world, they soon afterwards disappear. The present civilisation of Europe arises from the seeds scattered at different periods, by five or six great men, who left them to take their chance. These seeds were shapeless masses in appearance, but around them the swallows of subsequent ages built ingenious but fragile edifices of straw and cement. An Edgar, a Theodoric, a Charlemagne, a Louis IX, surnamed St. Louis, a Stephen of Hungary, a Gustavus, and some others whom I have no doubt forgotten,—these are the men from whom are derived all that remains at present of political constitutions. This is the point of view to which, in the first place, you must accustom yourself. Call to mind in how many different revolutions of all kinds, the hippodromus has seen parings of pretended laws of preceding reigns, soon replaced by new registers, which, all together, instead of retarding the fall of that powerful empire, beset by no other enemies than naked brigands and its own vices, hastened its fall and entire destruction.

Thus, slender ligaments, strengthened only by the dust that covers them, hold together all the policy of your states, that of the countries which surround you, the pretended foreign equilibrium, the exhaustion of Kings and territories, and the effeminacy of nations; the fiscal system, which, though it inflicts all worldly evils upon mankind, like every other scourge, has its corrective by its side, and by heaping upon the most unworthy the metals which flow from the New World to Europe, renders this torrent, which will in the end exhaust itself like every other, less dangerous with reference to the ravages of war, than the treasures were formerly, of the mines of Mesopotamia, Mount Niphates, and Spain, which armed the cupidity of conquerors.

All these things, combined to all appearance by chance, are the

hollow walls which support the cloth that served your predecessors upon the throne, as a snare to entrap and rob the unhappy people, but which your wisdom is now making you tear to pieces thread by thread. Other potentates and other constitutions have the same and still greater defects. I shall not tell them so because they have no ears. Neither would I have mentioned it to you at first, because, with equal wisdom, you have neither the same experience nor the same influence and reputation in the world, and all these things are necessary. But now, whatever your people, or certain among them, may say and believe, your reputation is well established, therefore with you all is possible; and all that is possible with you is good. BREAK, OH! BREAK ALL PACT WITH IMPIETY. The times are ripe in their kind, as your reputation is in its kind. The compass, that star of physical communication, and printing, that interpreter of moral correspondence, appeared three centuries before you in order thereby to prepare the way for you. Cast your eyes over the entire universe, not for the purpose of invading it in the dreams of exaggerated self-love—you could not do so—but in order to include it in the embrace of universal charity, and to confess every thing great in Providence, every thing little before Providence.

Brought by a sense of this to your natural modesty, you will see in yourself the stone detached from the top of the mountain, which will break the colossus of false politics, and make it fall into splinters. If you possessed only your own little domains, still the first grain of wheat occupies much less space, and yet its posterity covers the surface of the entire globe. In future openly admit, promote, protect, and superintend general instruction, under the dictation of the sovereign; at the same time, draw up a constitution. This is simple; you require only to be a state carpenter, and to raise a political edifice, each member of which lends solidity to, and receives it from the whole. Extend the power of the sovereign, but limit his will. Let him be absolute in his councils, but let him not be able to alter their form. Let him appoint to all public offices, but choose his officers only from certain ranks, and let these ranks be filled by the most scrupulous competition. Let all this be bound and kept together by public opinion. It is impossible to banish the republic from the world: it would be putting down newsmongers and reports. It is impossible that the republic can ever govern well, but it forms

a good council for an absolute chief. Let the republic then be universal, general, and always subordinate. Let nothing say *no* to the sovereign, except universal reason, which, terrestrially speaking, is God.

(*Letter dated Paris, September 5th* 1775.)

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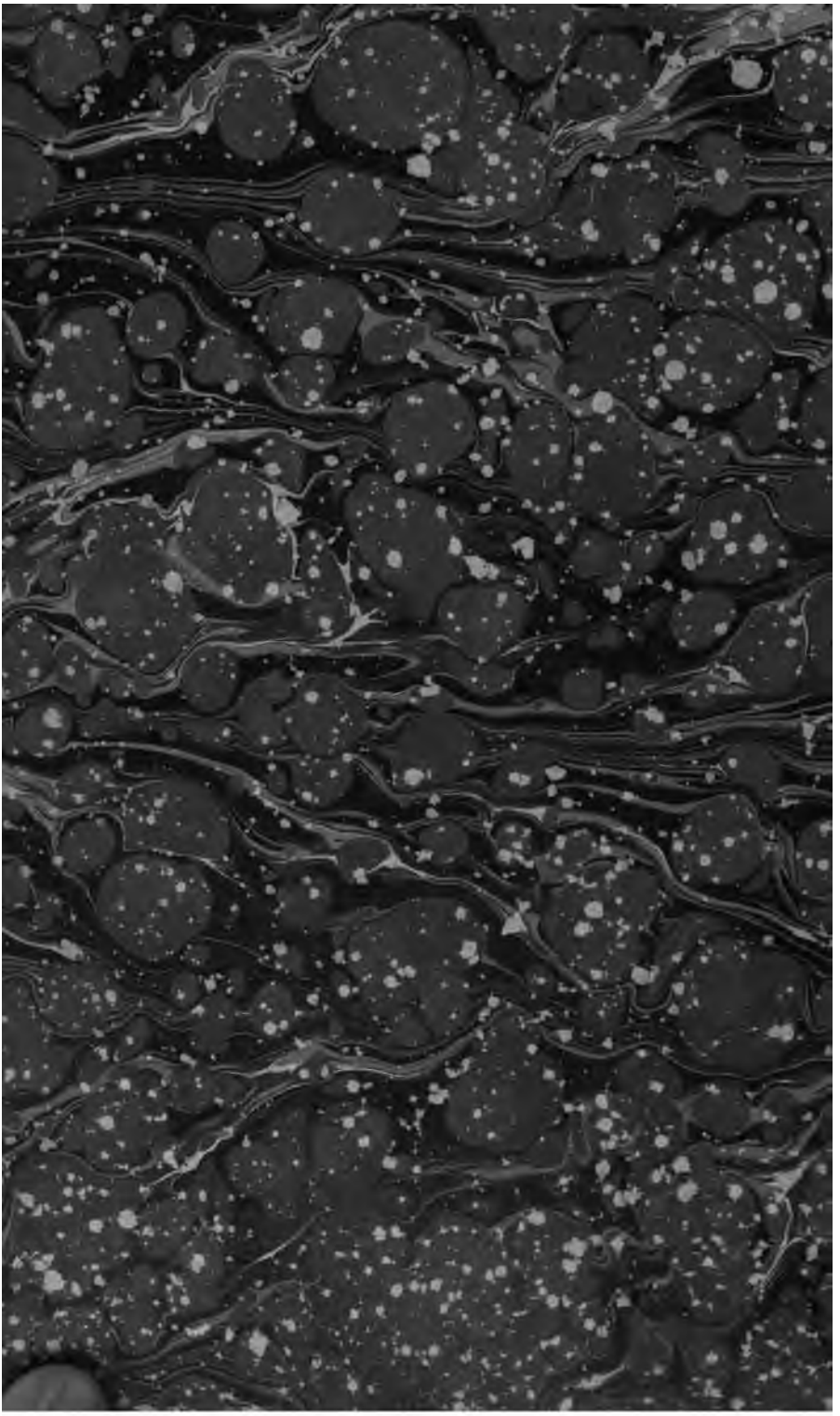
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